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UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA

THE SEX DIFFERENTIAL IN SUICIDE RATES: A Test of Durkheim's Theory of Integration/Regulation on the Suicide Rates in Quebec, 1931-1986.

BY

©

CATHERINE D. KRULL

A thesis submitted to the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts.

IN

DEMOGRAPHY

DEPARTMENT OF SOCIOLOGY

EDMONTON, ALBERTA

FALL, 1992

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The undersigned certify that they have read, and recommend to the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research for acceptance, a thesis entitled "THE SEX DIFFERENTIAL IN SUICIDE RATES: A Test of Durkheim's Theory of Integration/Regulation on the Suicide Rates in Quebec, 1931-1986" submitted by Catherine D. Krull in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts in Demography.

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ABSTRACT

This study develops the thesis that a rise in individualism, as indicated by a progressive weakening in integration and regulation, can account for Quebec's increasing suicide rates over time, from 1931 to 1986. The hypothesis is that the increasing suicide rates in Quebec can be explained as a result of 'the Quiet Revolution' of the early 1960's, which contributed to increased individualism and a decline in certain forms of collectivity, namely domestic and religious collective life. The indicators of rising individualism are decreasing religiosity and increasing divorce rates, proportion of married women with no children, unemployment rates, and proportion of married females in the labor force.

Specific attention is devoted to the sex differential in suicide rates. It will be argued that Durkheim's theory is unable to adequately explain the sex differential in suicide rates. In order to arrive at a more comprehensive understanding of this differential, Durkheim's concepts of 'integration' and 'regulation' are incorporated and synthesized with the contemporary feminist literature. It is proposed that the sex differential in suicide rates can be explained by different integrating and regulating structures for women that result from oppression and not from women's 'natural' differences as originally proposed by Durkheim. This reformulation of Durkheim's conception of sex roles and suicide is empirically applied to the Quebec case for the years 1931 to 1986 using log linear regression techniques appropriate for the analysis of rates.

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CHAPTER 1. INTRODUCTION

Quebec is of particular interest to demographers because of it's distinct ethnic, religious, historical, and cultural characteristics. Currently, it possesses the lowest total fertility rate in Canada, and on a global perspective, it has the lowest TFR next to Italy, which is a dramatic reversal of its' historically high fertility levels up to the mid-1960's. Recently, social scientists have focused their attention on social change and its demographic consequences (Davis,1987,1984; Keyfitz,1987; Rao,1987; Lesthaeghe,1980; Trovato,1991,1988; Caldwell,1987; Lux,1988). Many of Quebec's demographic changes since the Quiet Revolution which began in the early 1960's, such as a rapid decline in fertility rates, a sharp increase in divorce rates and a decrease in religiosity, can be attributed to a shift in ideology, namely, a shift towards individualism. One of the more dramatic of these demographic changes has been the significant increase in Quebec's suicide rates. Fortier, et. al. (1989) state that "Quebec has recently been promoted to the rank of number one in Canadian provinces for mortality due to suicide" (p.393). Quebec ranked fourth among the Canadian provinces in 1978 with a suicide rate well below the national average. In recent years, Quebec's suicide rate has increased significantly and now stands well above the national average (Fortier,et.al.;1989). For example, in the pre-Quiet Revolution time period (1931-1956), women had a suicide rate of 3.45 per 100,000 and men had a rate of 10.09. In the post-Quiet Revolution time period (1961-1986), women's suicide rate had risen to 6.72 per 100,000 (a change of 95 percent) but the male suicide rate had increased to 22.00 (a change of 118 percent). The ratio of male/female suicide rates actually widens over time from 2.92 in the pre-Quiet Revolution period to 3.27 in the post-Quiet Revolution period[1]. Thus, the increase in Quebec's suicide rates can be attributed to a substantial rise in male rather than female suicide.

This ideational explanation provides a contrast to previous explanations found in the literature which have focused on economic factors to explain the demographic behavior of this predominantly Catholic province. For example, Cormier and Klerman (1985) attempt to explain Quebec's rising suicide rates since 1966 as a result of economic fluctuations. They found that in the period between 1966 and 1981, "...economic fluctuations in Quebec, as indicated by unemployment rate changes, were highly associated with the changing suicide rates" (p.112).

Marini (1990) argues that individualism can be seen as a function of changes in economic structures. More specifically, she argues that "...progressive changes in the nature and organization of work under capitalism in Western industrial societies have produced a long-term shift from communal to market values and an accompanying rise of individualism" (p.4). Thus, a basic tenet of the structural arguments is that the economy determines and effects social norms and values.

---

[1] Mao (1990) notes in his study on Suicide in Canada that "males continue to have higher rates and the difference between males and females is expanding" (p.324).

However useful a structural approach might be in explaining demographic changes, it fails in fully explicating the factors that determine those changes. Preston (1984) maintains that:

> Economists' predictions about the direction of change have in general been on the mark, and their modes of reasoning have shed a good deal of light on the basis for private decisions. But it is doubtful whether the observed pace of [demographic trends]... could be produced by the accumulation of millions of private decisions made with constant utility functions under marginally altered economic circumstances (Preston,1984: 189).

Kingsley Davis (1963) has also written in support of ideational factors as the major causal explanation of demographic changes:

> ...the explanation of as fundamental a feature of society as its demographic changes is not to be found in some inflexible biological or economic law or in some particularistic cultural idiosyncrasy, but rather in the main features of the operating social organization on the one hand and, on the other, in the changing conditions which arise from past performance and the altering international politico-economic environment (p.361).

This is not to deny the importance of economic factors, only that individual ideas are perhaps more powerful explanatory factors and tend to precede structural factors.

The present study shows that a rise in individualism, as indicated by a progressive weakening in integration and regulation, can account for Quebec's increasing suicide rates over time. The hypothesis is that the suicide rates in Quebec can be explained as a result of 'the quiet revolution', which contributed to increased individualism and a decline in certain forms of collectivity, namely domestic and religious collective life. The indicators of rising individualism consist of decreasing religiosity and increasing proportion of the population who are divorced, proportion of married women with no children, unemployment rates and proportion of married females in the labor force.

Specific attention will be devoted to the sex differential in suicide rates. It will be argued that Durkheim's theory is unable to adequately explain the sex differential in suicide rates. In order to arrive at a more comprehensive understanding of this differential, Durkheim's concepts of 'integration' and 'regulation' are incorporated and synthesized with the contemporary feminist literature. It is proposed that the sex differential in suicide rates can be explained by different integrating and regulating structures for women that result from oppression and not from women's 'natural' differences as originally proposed by Durkheim. Finally, this reformulation of Durkheim's conception of sex roles and suicide will be empirically applied to the Quebec case for the years 1931 to 1986 using log linear regression techniques.

CHAPTER 2. THEORETICAL ORIENTATION

(a). The Concept of Individualism in a Durkheimian Framework.

The major explanatory view taken here is that of Durkheim's social integration/regulation theory[2]. In terms of theories developed on suicide, Durkheim's *Suicide* (1951/1897) is considered the 'seminal sociological study' (Gibbs,1968; Giddens,1978; Lukes,1973; Hassan, 1989). Gibbs (1968) states that:

> ...it is a mark of Durkheim's genius that he integrated ... social factors in a general theory. That is, his theory not only excludes nonsocial factors but also eliminates the need for a variety of special theories to account (ad hoc) for differences among specific populations, such as religious denominations, occupations, marital statuses, age groups, and nations. Thus, while Suicide provides a wealth of data on comparative suicide rates and stands as a classic contribution to sociological methodology, the book's truly great contribution is as a theory building endeavour" (p.76).

Likewise, Lukes (1973) maintains that in spite of the theory's 'difficulties and obscurities', "Durkheim's theory, with its isolation of the external and general social preconditions for suicide...represented a major advance in suicide studies, which still dominates the field and the implications of which have still to be fully explored" (p.222). Giddens (1978), probably the most critical of Durkheim's theory, admits that "Durkheim's *Suicide* has subsequently become so well known...[because of]...the way in which Durkheim applied his conception of sociological method to explain suicide"(p47). Thus, Durkheim's theory of suicide, specifically his concepts of social integration and regulation, provides a useful framework from which suicide rates in Quebec are analyzed.

---

[2] All quotations from Durkheim are from his book, Suicide,1951[1897] unless otherwise indicated.

Durkheim argued that suicide is a function of a society's integrating and regulating abilities[3] and not due to individual characteristics and peculiarities:

> ...for each social group there exists a specific tendency towards suicide, which is explained neither by the organic-psychological constitution of individual nor by the nature of the physical environment. Therefore, through a process of elimination, it must necessarily depend on social causes and be in itself a collective phenomenon..." (1951[1897]:145).

When analyzing variations in suicide rates then, it is imperative to look at the characteristics of the society rather than those of the individual in order to formulate a comprehensive explanation. Suicide rates are social facts that can only be explained in relation to other social facts. When Durkheim referred to suicide as a social fact, he was not referring to individual suicides but rather "It was suicide rates, as disclosed by statistics, that constituted the social fact to be explained as an effect of an imbalance of social structural forces" (109). Individuals integrated into a collective are more protected from suicide than individuals who are not because according to Durkheim, the collective provides its members with meaning, purpose and regulation. In essence, the collective provides its members with a collective conscience which is a normative order that encourages members to act and to think in specific ways. Without this, individuals are susceptible to despair and consequently, are more predisposed to suicide.

---

[3] The question often raised in the literature is in regards to whether the concepts of integration and regulation are two distinct concepts or whether they indeed have similar definitions (see Barcley-Johnson, 1965; Breault,1986; Breault and Barkey,1982). It is argued in this paper that the two concepts are highly interrelated in that integration leads to regulation. However, the concepts take on a definition of their own in that regulation does not lead to integration. Thus, the concepts of integration and regulation are interrelated but they do not mean one in the same. For this reason, the two concepts need to be treated separately.

Durkheim argued then that modernization has led to the rise of individualism and to a weakening of collective bonds. Modernization has led to a change in ideology away from collectivity, such as that based on the family and the church, to one centered on individualism and secularism.

> If there is one truth that history has settled beyond all question, it is that religion embraces an ever-diminishing part of social life. Originally it extended to everything; everything social was religious; the two words were synonymous. Then gradually political, economic and scientific functions freed themselves from the religious function, became established separately, taking on an increasingly pronounced temporal character... The individual feels himself to be, and is, in fact, less 'acted upon'; he becomes more a source of spontanious activity. In short, not only does the sphere of religion not increase at the same time and to the same extent as the sphere of temporal life, but it progressively diminishes (1985 [1893], p.49).

It is well established that a decrease in mortality and a sustained natural increase provided the impetus for societies to modernize. Berthoud (1987) argues that modernity is associated with secularization, which is necessary for the independent development of society and the advent of Western individualism. He also maintains that there are disadvantages to modernization: "...a rise of potentially destructive tendencies in the life of the individual and society, growth of stress and social tension, and expansion of negative social phenomena. The essential reason for this is the attrition of a stable value system..." (p.33).

(b). The Rise of Individualism in Quebec

The ethos of individualism has been growing in populartity in most industrialized countries. Udry (1974) defines individualism as follows:

> The philosophy of individualism asserts that the value of the individual is paramount over the value of the social groups. The goals of the individual are given preference and his/her well being and happiness are criteria for social and individual decisions. It is not the duty of the individual to sacrifice his happiness for the well being of other people (p.14).

This trend towards modernization and individualism has occured in most of the industrial world but at different points in time. Lux (1988) explains that between 1851 and 1921, "the demographic transition was well under way in English-speaking Canada, but had only barely begun in Quebec" (p.6). English-speaking Canada was experiencing the effects of modernization by the turn of the century, while Quebec was lagging well behind. Before the 1960's, the Catholic Church emphasized family life above all else and discouraged individual desires for further education, social and financial success. Wasserman (1991) argues that "prior to 1960, [...] the Roman Catholic Church built a Chinese wall between the province and Canada and the United States, limiting the occupations (e.g., textiles) into which Francophones could enter. The church achieved this power through its control of the educational system, which stressed a classical and professional training, rather than a technical or engineering orientation" (p.4). The 'Quiet Revolution', which occurred during the early sixties, was a political attempt on the part of Quebec to catch up to the rest of Canada in terms of modernization. Cormier and Klerman (1985) explain that:

> ...during this time period, social troubles and strong popular pressures forced the newly elected liberal government to adopt new policies based on such social-democratic ideas as income security, public ownership of natural resources, democratization of education, universal health care, etc. Following an era of ultraconservative social climate, two important phenomena occured during this time period, namely, the rapid adoption of new liberal policies and the drastic change in social behavior. (p.112).

Likewise, the Clio Collective (1987) argue that:

> After the creation of the ministries of Education and Social Affairs in 1964, the great upheavals of the Quiet Revolution began: secularization, co-educational schools, mixed institutions and hospitals, bureaucratization, a multitude of new professions, and tremendous growth of unionization, especially in the public service. With these changes came a reevaluation of the competence of women in the work place (The Clio Collective: 1987:325).

Thus, the 'quiet revolution' encouraged further education and brought political and economic success. Individualism began to replace the traditional orientation towards family. Trovato (1988) maintains that as society modernizes, "the individual becomes increasingly independent and less subordinate to the traditional forms of social control such as the extended family, the village, and the church" (p.508). Individualism brings in its wake an increase in egalitarianism as indicated by shifts in other societal norms and values. Women, as never before, experienced a rise in status via their increased participation in the labour force and rising income potential. Concomitantly, an erosion of Catholic authority, a decline in rates of first marriages, later age at first marriage, higher divorce rates, a decline in fertility rates, were also to be observed. All of these are indicators of individualism and reflect a departure from social integration and all thus contribute to the increase in suicide rates. Thus, although individualism is imperative for societal advancement, it also brings in its wake "pathological forms which need to be analyzed" (Durkheim,1985 [1893]: 55). One such pathological form is suicide.

To summarize, the Quiet Revolution brought in its wake rapid modernization but also created social disorganization by breaking down the integrating and regulating functions of traditional structures. Concomitantly, a rise in individualism lead to an increase in suicide rates. Durkheim argued that modernization led to a change in ideology away from the family and the church to one centered on individualism. This ideological change is reflected in a decrease in religiosity, an increase in divorces, a decrease in fertility, an increase in the number of childless couples, an increase in female labour force participation, and in educational attainment.

CHAPTER 3. DURKHEIM'S THEORY OF SUICIDE

Durkheim (1951[1897]) defined suicide as "all cases of death resulting directly or indirectly from a positive or negative act of the victim himself, which he knows will produce this result" (p.44). Focusing on suicide rates in several European countries, he postulated that suicide is related to the degree to which individuals are integrated in a society and regulated by that society. The basic tenet of his research is that "suicide varies inversely with the degree of integration of the social groups of which the individual forms a part" (Durkheim, 1951[1897]:209). From this general stance, Durkheim derived three propositions:

> (1). Suicide varies inversely with the degree of integration of religious society.
> (2). Suicide varies inversely with the degree of integration of domestic society.
> (3). Suicide varies inversely with the degree of integration of political society (Durkheim, 1951[1897]:208).[4]

Durkheim maintained that there is nothing inherently peculiar about these three societies that reduces the risk of suicide other than they "are all strongly integrated social groups" (p.209). The more an individual is integrated in and regulated by a collectivity, the more he depends on the collectivity and the less he thinks of himself. In other words, the interests of the collective come before the interests of the individual.

> ...When society is strongly integrated, it holds individuals under its control, considers them at its service and thus

---

[4] Due to the limitations of data in Vital Statistics and the Canadian Census, only the first two of Durkheim's propositions will be focused on.

> forbids them to dispose wilfully of themselves. Accordingly it opposes their evading their duties to it through death....There is, in short, in a cohesive and animated society a constant interchange of ideas and feelings from all to each and each to all, something like a mutual moral support, which instead of throwing the individual on his own resources, leads him to share in the collective energy and supports his own when exhausted (1951[1897], 209-210).

The individual who is integrated in society in essence, has a feeling of purpose, a sense of being part of something that transcends simple mortal life.

The opposite of this collective state is a state of egoism whereby "the individual ego asserts itself to excess in the face of the social ego and at its expense..." (p.209). Thus, Durkheim argued that excessive individualism characterizes a type of suicide, namely, egoistic suicide. Disturbances to the collective order leads to an increase in egoistic suicides because individuals "no longer find a basis for existence in life..." (p.258)[5]. Durkheim argued that society simultaneously 'disintegrates' as the individual disengages himself from social life. When people detach themselves from the group...

> ...it no longer then possesses the requisite authority to retain them in their duty if they wish to desert; and conscious of its own weakness, it even recognizes their right to do freely what it can no longer prevent. So far as they are the admitted

---

[5] A frequent argument in the research is that suicide counts observed by Vital Statistics do not definitively represent egoistic suicides as opposed to anomic, altruistic or even fatalistic types of suicide as defined by Durkheim (1951). However, it has been argued that we can get around this problem by assuming that in Western society most, if not all suicides are of the egoistic type (thus as a result of individualism, etc.) and perhaps also of the anomic type. Also, some researcher have tried to argue that unemployment (as a predictor of suicide) reflects 'economic' anomie, while religious and/or domestic detachment are more likely a manifestation of egoistic type of processes (see Lester,1972; Douglas,1986; Stack,1982).

> masters of their destinies, it is their privilege to end their lives. They, on their part, have no reason to endure life's sufferings patiently (p.209).

Regulation, in essence, is how individuals come to internalize and follow the norms of the society. Low regulation leads to a sense of normlessness or to what Durkheim refered to as 'anomie'. Anomie, in turn, increases the risk of suicide. For this reason, Durkheim refered to the type of suicide that results from normlessness as 'anomic suicide'.

(a) Religious Society

Durkheim postulated that "Suicide varies inversely with the degree of integration of religious society" (Durkheim,1951[1897] :208). He analyzed the relationship between suicide rates and religious affiliation in several European countries and noted that suicide was not as prevalent in the Catholic countries as in the Protestant countries. Moreover, he observed that Jewish societies had the lowest suicide rates of all. The reason for this, he argued, is that the Catholic church and the Jewish church have a tendency to limit the freedom of individual thought as compared to the Protestant church:

> So if Protestantism concedes a greater freedom to individual thought than Catholicism [and Judaism], it is because it has fewer common beliefs and practices. Now, a religious society cannot exist without a collective *credo* and the more extensive the *credo* the more unified and strong is the society. [...] The greater concessions a confessional group makes to individual judgment, the less it dominates lives, the less its cohesion and vitality. We thus reach the conclusion that the superiority of Protestantism with respect to suicide results

> from its being a less strongly integrated church than the Catholic church (1951,[1897]:159-160).

Therefore, Catholics and Jews are protected more from the risk of suicide than Protestants because they have a strong sense of community, a rigid emphasis on rituals, durable social ties and an extremely high degree of interaction. Protestants, on the other hand, emphasize a more individualistic orientation and encourage free inquiry. As a result, Protestants have a higher tendency towards suicide.

Durkheim argued that religion does not protect the individual from suicide because of its inherent dogmas but because religion is itself a society, with common beliefs and attitudes that bind its followers into an integrative and regulated collectivity. "The more numerous and strong these collective states of mind are, the stronger the integration of the religious community, and also the greater its preservative value" (p.170). Thus, the more integrating and regulating the abilities of the religious society, the more collective the orientation of its members and consequently, the lower the tendency towards suicide. Conversely, the less religiously integrated and regulated are individuals, the more individualistic they become and consequently, the higher the tendency towards suicide.

There have been inconsistent findings in regards to Durkheim's theory of religious affiliation and suicide. Breault (1986) found support "for Durkheim's proposition that Catholics commit suicide less often than non-Catholics" (p.652) whereas Stack (1980) and Pope and Danigelis (1981) found no support for Durkheim's hypothesis that religious integration is inversely related to suicide rates. Stack (1982) maintains that these results can be explained by the fact that the Catholic and Protestant levels of religious integration have converged over the last eighty years and so it is not surprising that their suicide rates have also converged.

Inconsistent findings such as these have led to a revision of Durkheim's theory on religious integration by some authors (Pescosolido,1990; Trovato, 1993; Pescosolido and Georgianna, 1989). These authors argue that suicide rates are not so much differentiated by religious denomination as they are by religious social networks. Trovato (1993) argues that "those religions which promote the establishment of enduring social networks with a high degree of social and emotional supports for its members tend to exhibit relatively low suicide rates" (p.5). The best proxy of religious integration is in terms of religiosity rather than religious denomination. Religiosity is often measured by church attendance at the micro level or the proportion of a population who report to have no religion at the aggregate level. Trovato (1993) argues in favour of the latter in that "individuals who have no attachment to a religious group are more likely to be socially isolated and hence possess relatively few enduring social ties" and so have a higher propensity towards suicide (p.6).

This revision of Durkheim's theory is supported by the current literature at both the micro and macro level of analysis. Larson (1991) analyzed survey data from 179 married couples in a Canadian city and found that religiosity was negatively correlated with individualism. Thus, the married individuals who indicated no religion and who did not attend church are more individualistic than those married individuals who indicated a religious affiliation and who attended church on a regular basis. Larson's results were more significant for married females than for married males suggesting that "Wives of the eighties have a new sense of independence...The joint measure of individualism is largely explained by the wife indicators; indeed, the wife indicators appear to be the most powerful of individualism overall" (p.22). Similarly, Balakrishnan and Chen (1990) conclude from their study, using the data from the Canadian Fertility Survey of 1984, that

> ...although overall church attendance may have declined in recent decades, variations by religiosity continue to be significant. Women who are very religious are ...traditional in their views and they and unlikely to accept non-conformist behaviours, such as cohabitation before marriage, premarital sex, abortion and divorce except for serious reasons...On the other hand, women who are least religious are presumed to be more liberal in their views and accepting of non-conformist behaviours (pp. 318-319).

Marini (1990) found similar results when she analyzed the U.S. Value Survey data. She found that religiosity was much higher for older cohorts than for the younger ones and that there was an inverse relationship between religiosity and individualism: "it seems likely that much of the birth cohort variation observed [in terms of religiosity] is indicative of social change" (p.50). She found that housewifes who were born after World War II were more religious and thus, more traditional than women who worked outside the home. Women who worked outside of the home "demonstrate much greater similarity to males" in terms of individualism (p.54). She concludes that overall, "Religion, which served an integrating function in agrarian societies that upheld traditional family values and inculcated norms of sharing and giving, has progressively lost its political and social functions, replaced by the ideology of rational economic action with the self-interested individual as the primary unit" (p.55).

Trovato and Vos (1990) focused on the effect of domestic/religious individualism on youth suicide in Canada and found that "declines in the level of integration and regulation, as manifested in growing individualism in society produce increased levels of suicide" (p.78). Breault (1986) tested whether Durkheim's religious integration hypothesis could explain suicide rates in the U.S. in the time period between 1933 and 1980. He analyzed eight data sets: '50 states at six different times between 1933 and 1980 and 216 counties in 1970 and 1980' and found that church membership is one of the strongest predictors of suicide rates (the other predictor was divorce). When Stack (1983) controlled for the effects of military participation, income from social security and unemployment rates, he found a strong negative relationship between church attendance and suicide among young Americans, aged 15-19.

(b) Domestic Society

Durkheim argued that domestic society protects individuals from suicide just as religious society does. Domestic society is composed of essentially two groups: the conjugal group and the family group. The difference between the two groups is that the latter includes any possible children that the married couple may have. These two groups, along with the effects of married female labour force participation on suicide are often used in the literature as proxies of domestic integration. All three, the conjugal group, the family group and married female labour force participation will be treated as separate entities as they differ in their effects regarding to suicide.

***i.* The conjugal group.**

Focusing on the conjugal group, Durkheim argued that married individuals are less likely to commit suicide than single individuals and that divorced individuals have the highest propensity for suicide.

> Now divorce implies a weakening of matrimonial regulation. Where it exists, and especially where law and custom permit its excessive practice, marriage is nothing but a weakened simulacrum of itself; it is an inferior form of marriage. .... Its restraint upon desire is weakened; since it is more easily disturbed and superseded, it controls passion less and passion tends to rebel (p.271).

Moreover, the state of marriage is more beneficial for men than it is for women. Concomitantly, the risk of suicide for divorced men is substantially higher than for divorced women. Durkheim explains that married individuals have lower suicide rates because there are 'accepted norms' of marriage which regulate the behaviors of married couples and as such, provide them with a sense of 'moral equilibrium'. Individuals who are single do not benefit from the regulations of marriage and consequently, have a higher tendency towards anomic suicide. The state of marriage also places emphasis on the needs of the couple rather than on the individual. Consequently, integration increases and as accordingly, married individuals gain meaning in their lives. This, in effect decreases their tendency towards suicide.

Durkheim also demonstrated that married males are protected more from suicide than married females. Suicide rates were significantly lower for married men than for single men. Married men had lower rates whether children were present or not. However, childless married women had higher suicide rates than single women. Thus, Durkheim concluded that marriage in itself offers protection from suicide but "it is very limited and also benefits one sex only... (p.198)...in itself conjugal society is harmful to the woman and aggravates her tendency to suicide" (p.189). In essence, it is not the fact of marriage in itself which protects women from suicide, but the combination of being married and having children.

The fact that married women are at more of a disadvantage than are married men rules out matrimonial selection as a major causal explanation for the differences found in the suicide rates of married and single individuals.

> Conjugal society, so disadvantageous for women, must, even in the absence of children, be admitted to be advantageous for men. Those who enter it are not an aristocracy of birth; they do not bring to marriage, as an existing quality, a temperament disinclining them to suicide, but acquire it by living the conjugal life (p.193).

In order for matrimonial selection to be applicable, both sexes would have to profit from marriage with regards to immunity from suicide and as Durkheim has shown, they do not. The only possible explanation, Durkheim argues, is that there is something about the conjugal state that benefits men but not females. Durkheim states that men benefit more from marriage because they have a higher need for moral regulation than women:

> Women's sexual needs have less of a mental character because, generally speaking, her mental life is less developed. [...] Being a more instinctive creature than man, women has only to follow her instincts to find calmness and peace. She does not require so strict a social regulation as marriage and particularly as monogamic marriage (p.272).

Durkheim also looked at the relationship between divorce and suicide and found that divorced persons have a much higher propensity for suicide than the rest of the population. The tendency towards suicide increases for the divorced because:

> ...divorce implies a weakening of matrimonial regulation. Where it exists, and especially where law and custom permit its excessive practice, marriage is nothing but a weakened simulacrum of itself; it is an inferior form of marriage. It cannot produce its useful effects to the same degree....One cannot be strongly restrained by a chain which may be broken on one side or the other at any moment (pp.271-272).

As noted above, men benefit more from marriage so that when divorce occurs, men no longer have the integration and regulation that marriage had previously provided them.

> When one is no longer checked, one becomes unable to check one's self....New hopes constantly awake, only to be deceived, leaving a trail of weariness and disillusionment behind them ...The uncertainty of the future plus his own indeterminateness therefore condemns him to constant change"(p.271).

Thus, divorce weakens regulation and integration, which can lead to anomie, egoism or to a combination of both. More simply put, divorce leads to excessive individualism and as such, divorced persons are more prone to commit suicide.

Davis (1987) argued that in the past, marriage "formerly served as a reproductive institution in part because it was durable and therefore, with close kin, provided a stable milieu for rearing children" (p.57). The nature of marriage has changed as a response to modernization. For example, postponement of marriage is not being used as a method of birth control but rather "the answer lies largely in the other traits of modernity" (Davis,1987:55). These other traits are the high rates of divorce, an increase in women's labour force participation, declining values in religiosity and voluntary childlessness. "These changes decrease the need for marriage, especially for the young, at the same time that they increase the penalties" (Davis,1987:55). Davis (1984) maintains that it is the norm for divorce rates to increase as society modernizes; this can be attributed to a growing sense of individualism.

The literature provides support for Durkheim's views on the relationship between marital status and suicide (Gibbs, 1969; Stack 1980,1981, 1985; Pope and Danigelis,1979; Trovato, 1986,1987,1991; Wasserman, 1984; Goltz and Larson,1991). For example, Trovato (1991) looked at the relationship between marital status and suicide among those 35 years and older in Canada for the period of 1951-1981. He hypothesized that "being married as opposed to nonmarried entails a lower risk of suicide, and that marital status transitions from an unmarried state (e.g., single, widowed, divorced, separated) to the married state would benefit men more than it would women" (p.1). Trovato found that divorced individuals had a higher propensity for suicide but over time men experienced a greater acceleration in risk than did women. Moreover, he estimated that 're-marriage after divorce' was more protective for men than for women in terms of suicide. Males benefit more from re-marriage because the effects of divorce are different for men and women. Men suffer from the loss of social integration whereas women suffer material loss. Since "divorce represents a significant loss of integration [for men], anomie arising from divorce is more devastating to males" (p.18). Trovato explains that since men seem to suffer the most from anomie when divorced, it is no wonder than men benefit more from re-marriage than do women. "Given the importance of social support in maintaining people's well-being, it is not surprising that those who lack it and regain it through marriage or remarriage would obtain a significant source of protection from the risk of committing suicide" (p.18). Trovato concludes that his findings support Durkheim's theory of anomic suicide.

Goltz and Larson (1991) looked at the relationship of religiosity, marital commitment, income, education and individualism among 179 married couples, randomly selected from the city of Edmonton, Alberta. Their major hypothesis was that religiosity and marital commitment is negatively related to individualism. Furthermore, they predicted that "individualism will be of greater importance to wives than to husbands" (p.9). Their findings support the hypothesis that religiosity and marital commitment are negatively related to individualism. Moreover, education and income were positive indicators of individualism among wives but not for husbands. Thus, they found that the primary indicators of individualism for wives were low marital commitment and religiosity and high education and income. However, marital commitment and education were not significant indicators of individualism for husbands. Of particular interest was their finding that "the joint (couple) measure of individualism is largely explained by the wife indicators; indeed, the wife indicators appear to be the most powerful predictors of individualism overall" (p.22). Wives who were less committed to marriage and to religion but who scored high on the education and income indices were more individualistic, regardless of age. Goltz and Larson conclude that "Wives of the eighties have a new sense of independence: in the ways in which they define their marriages, in their attitudes toward intimacy and sex roles, and in their self-definitions" (p22).

Balakrishnan (1987) found from his research on marriage dissolution in Canada, that "younger cohorts are more afraid of marriage dissolution, and as a result they may tend to concentrate on individual achievements and postpone childbearing and family formation to some extent" (in Rao,1987:36). Women who postpone childbearing, however, reduce their reproductive span and as such, have fewer children and even increase their chances of being childless.

Others have also found support for Durkheim's propositions about marital status. Breault (1986) in his analysis of data from 50 American states found that suicide rates were strongly associated with divorce rates for the years 1970 and 1980 at the .05 level of significance (correlation coefficient: 1970=.705; 1980=.847). Similarly, Wasserman (1984) found that when unemployment, seasonal effects, autocorrelation, and lagged effects were taken into account, variations in American suicide rates in the time period of 1964-1977, were still substantially explained by divorce rates. Wasserman concludes that the results "suggest that the kinship system is being greatly altered and that this change is decreasing the regulation of the individual ego and increasing the tendency toward suicide" (p.853).

To summarize the literature, profound changes have occured in the institution of marriage as a result of modernization. Remaining single, postponement of marriage, and divorce are responses to increasing individualism and consequently indicate a decline in integration and regulation. In Quebec, the total divorce rate per 1000 marriages rose from 7.1 in 1951 to 281.7 in 1981. "Quebec is close to a situation whereby only half of the population marries, and of that half, between a quarter and a half divorces" (Caldwell, 1987:30). Moreover, as Durkheim demonstrated, increasing individualism (as indicated by an increase in divorce and in the never married as well as later age at first marriage), is causally linked to high suicide rates.

***ii.* The family group.**

Durkheim also argued that married couples who have children are less inclined to commit suicide than those who do not have children. Moreover, the immunity from suicide which is enjoyed by married couples is due more from having children than from the conjugal state. This is more true for married females than for married men for as Durkheim notes: "...married but childless women commit suicide half again as often as unmarried women of the same age" (p.188). Moreover, Durkheim argued that the more children a couple has, the more protected they are from suicide: "As suicides diminish, family density regularly increases" (p.199). The more children in the family, the more its members are integrated and regulated.

> Where collective sentiments are strong, it is because the force with which they affect each individual conscience is echoed in all the others, and reciprocally. The intensity they attain therefore depends on the number of consciences which react to them in common...No such powerful traditions can be formed [in a family of small numbers] as unite the members of a single group, even surviving it and attaching successive generations to one another....Likewise, when the family is small, few relatives are ever together; so that domestic life languishes and the home is occasionally deserted (pp.201-203).

Therefore, members of large families form a type of collective society and as such, are less individualistic and are more protected from the risk of suicide.

There has been very little in the way of current literature focusing on the relationship between family density and suicide and virtually nothing in terms of studies focusing on Canadian data. Veevers (1973) found some indirect support on this issue; namely that the single-to-married suicide ratio in the U.S. increases "during the child-rearing years and then narrows as the home becomes an empty nest" (in Stack,1982:55). Stack (1980) did a comparative analysis of several countries and found that suicide varies inversely with the birth rate. Breed (1966) found an inverse relationship between men who committed suicide and the presence of children. Focusing on fertility rates in the USA from 1933 to 1984, Lester and Yang (1992) found from their time series analysis that fertility was strongly associated with a lower suicide rate for those aged 15-44. These few American studies represent the only new data on this topic since Durkheim's results.

Davis (1984) argues that the new egalitarian system brought about by modernization is responsible for high divorce rates and a postponement of marriage, all of which have detered childbearing. Childrearing has also become a hindrance for working women. "Thus it was in a sense the rising prosperity itself, viewed from the standpoint of the individual's desire to get ahead and appear respectable, that forced a modification of his reproductive behavior" (Davis, 1963:352). Davis argues that the only possible outcome of this new egalitarian system is further increases in divorce rates and below replacement birth rates.

Aries (1980) argues that the fertility decline after the 1960's can be explained by a shift in attitudes. Aries however, focuses specifically on changes in attitudes toward children to explain fertility levels.

> I see the current decrease in the birth rate as being, on the contrary, provoked by exactly the opposite attitude. The days of the child-king are over. The under-40 generation is leading us into a new epoch, one in which the child occupies a smaller place, to say the least (p.645).

Thus, Aries argues that in contemporary society, the individual is 'king' and children are but a complement to the adult life.

This fits in well with an argument presented by Mandell (1988), who argues the the rights of women are intimately linked to those of children.

> Women's roles and responsibilities for children depend on prevailing conceptions of children. When children are seen as independent and adult-like, women have more freedom to live independent lives themselves. Conversely, when children are constructed as helpless dependents requiring constant molding, women's responsibilities as mothers, sisters and grandmothers intensify (p.52).

Keyfitz (1986) focuses on individual decision making and concludes that:

> If we are to know why people have tended to give up having children in favor of [work] and other activities, we need some knowledge of this kind: how do people perceive the actual motions, hour against hour, of preparing food for a child, dressing the child, entertaining the child, compared with the other things they might be doing in that time? Compared, that is, with the actual motions that one goes through in a typical office day on the one hand, or with modern leisure pursuits on the other (Keyfitz,1984:144).

Keyfitz maintains that modernization and contraception led to the collapse of the breadwinner system and as a result, freed women from their traditional male dependency. This in turn, led to an increase in female labour force participation and an increase in women's wages. As a consequence, fertility rates dropped in an unprecedented fashion. The crucial factor involved in the decreasing fertility rates was a change in the way females viewed their role in society (Keyfitz,1984;149).

> Acceptable jobs for women have increased their weight in domestic decision making. Women's liberation gave them the moral right to decide whether or not to have a child, and the technology of the pill, the IUD, and sterilization put in their own hands the physical means to implement that right (Keyfitz,1984:149).

Women's new found freedom and status can hardly compete with the 'lonely and unchallenging' work involved in childrearing. Thus, Keyfitz like Davis, argues that ideational change away from collectivity and towards individualism leads to structural change which then inadvertently effects the fertility rate.

Similar to Keyfitz and Davis, Rao (1987) argues that the fertility decline can be explained by a shift to individualistic attitudes by pointing out that "increased opportunities and career aspirations may force many would-be-mothers to consider childbearing as an obstacle of advancement" (p.33). Historically, French-Canadian social structure was dependent on the family. However, with modernization and increasing individualism, "motherhood is becoming a matter of taste and is often in competition with other social roles" (Rao,1987:28). As a result, Quebec women are not only having fewer children, an increasing proportion are opting to remain childless. Rao analyzed the cohort trends and correlates of childlessness and found an increase from 16.8 to 22.0 per cent in the proportion of ever-married childless women in Quebec over a ten year period (1971-1981). "According to the the 1980 Quebec survey, almost nine per cent of those married between 1976 and 1980 do not plan to have any children" (Rao, 1987:32). Caldwell (1987) predicts that if these trends continue, only one in every two Quebecers will ever marry. Rao concludes that in Quebec, voluntary childlessness among ever-married women is a response to societal changes and "can be seen as more of a contributor to the overall lower level of fertility in 1981 compared to other provinces" (p.32). Safiliios-Rothschild (1977), draws a similar conclusion from her literature review on the relationship between women's work and fertility, namely that "women's work depresses fertility as a result of the working women's different values and attitudes as well as of the practical dilemmas they face" (p.355).

Additional evidence is offered by Lesthaeghe (1980), who documents "the ways in which the nature of the fertility transition is contingent upon changes in the normative code and the system of social control" (p.527). Lesthaeghe's work highlights the first two of Ainsley Coales's preconditions for a marital fertility decline: "(1) fertility control must be advantageous in one way or another for the household concerned, and (2) the act of controlling fertility within marriage must be ethically and morally acceptable" (in Lesthaeghe,1980:535). He maintains that marital fertility control is contingent on the subsequent moral code and thus, fertility decline will occur only if the regulatory mechanisms of a traditional moral code erodes to incorporate a greater tolerance for individual choice. Lesthaeghe and Surkyn (1988) conclude that:

> Greater religiosity and stronger public morality are negatively associated with the individuation dimension. Educational qualities of imagination and independence are strong positive correlates of individuation, and the same holds in the political sphere for greater employee control over means of production, protest proneness, and postmaterialism. ...Finally, sexual freedom, approval of unmarried motherhood, partnership outside marriage, and easier divorce loads positively on the individuation dimension, whereas social endogamy and parenthood tend to be modest indicators of the contrary (p.15).

To summarize the literature, a reduction in fertility can be seen as a response to a change in ideology towards increasing individualism. Moreover, as Durkheim demonstrated, increasing individualism (as indicated by having few or no children), leads to a lack of integration and regulation and as such, should be causally linked to high suicide rates.

iii. **Married Female Labour Force Participation.**

Considering the drastic changes in women's labour force participation, especially over the last few decades, it is necessary to critically examine the possible effects that these changes have had on suicide rates. Davis (1987) maintains that all things considered, an orientation towards individualism is necessary if wives are to participate in the labour force. He found that in almost all the industrial countries, the proportion of wives working has dramatically risen over the past two decades. Davis argues that this is an inevitable outcome of modernization and contributes to a growing individualism. He concludes that female labour force participation will continue to increase until it approximates that of men and therefore, it should be expected that women will become more individualistic (Davis,1984).

Rao (1987) supports Davis' suggestion that women are becoming more individualistic as their participation in the labour force increases. For example, he points out that wives' labour force participation in 1986 is positively associated with childlessness in Quebec: "the chances of being childless are as high as 76 per cent for the 15-24 age group who are in the labour force, compared to the women who are not in the labour force" (p.41). Rao also suggests that another indicator of rising individualism is increasing income for women. Women who have high incomes tend to have fewer children or no children at all. As a result there is less family social integration.

Similarly, Safiliios-Rothschild (1977), concluded from her literature review on the relationship between women's work and fertility, that wives who work are less financially dependent on their husbands which enables them to feel more secure. Work provides social contacts for women and a self-identity outside that of being mothers and wives. Therefore, working wives are not tied either economically or socially to the home. Also, the time spent involved in domestic duties is decreased when wives work outside the home. Although Durkheim did not include the effects of the sex role revolution into his theory, there exist some contemporary theories that do attempt to explain the ramifications of female labour force participation on suicide rates. For example, Gibbs' and Short's (1964) concept of status integration is an attempt to operationalize Durkheim's concept of social integration. Their basic tenet is that "the suicide rate of a population varies inversely with the degree of status integration in that population" (1968:86). Status integration refers to the proportion of a population that are occupying a particular role or status configuration. Thus, a frequently occupied status configuration would not involve role conflict whereas an infrequently occupied status configuration is "presumed to involve role conflicts and weak social relations, which is the rationale for predicting a relatively high suicide rate for the occupants of the configuration" (1968: pp.88-89). Some research has supported the theory of status integration (see Stack,1978,1985; Conklin and Simpson,1987). For example, Strattford and Gibbs

(1984) find a correlation of -.685 for the measures of occupational integration and suicide. Strafford and Gibbs conclude from their study, based on data from the 1970 U.S. census, that "Given the impressive findings pertaining to occupational integration both in the present test and in previous tests, it may appear that [...] the 'key' dimension of status integration is occupation"(p.657). However, other research have found little support for the relationship between status integration and suicide (see Stafford and Gibbs,1984; Ornstein,1983; Trovato,1987).

A major argument in the literature states that women's labour force participation leads to role conflict which may increase female suicide rates For example, it is often argued that suicide rates will be higher for women as a consequence of increasing role expectations in that married women who work outside the home, especially if they are also mothers, are likely to experience conflict between their roles of worker, wife and mother. As a consequence, they are less likely to be integrated into any particular group and thus, have a higher propensity towards suicide. Lynch (1988) goes so far as to argue that "'women are freeing themselves up to die like men', pointing to what he claimed was a rise in [...] suicide among career women" (in Faludi,1991:38).

However, Faludi (1991) argues that there is no evidence to support this and conlcudes that this conception of female employment as being pathological for women is nothing more than a myth. Rather, she argues that

> ...employment improves women's mental health. [...] Whether they are professional or blue-collar workers, working women

> experience less depression than housewives; and the more challenging the career, the better their mental and physical health. Women who have never worked have the highest levels of depression. Working women are less susceptible than housewives to mental disorders big and small-from suicides and nervous breakdowns to insomnia and nightmares (pp.37-38).

Verbrugge's (1988) study supports this position. She concludes from her large-scale study that "women's health is hurt by their lower labor-force participation rates" (p.37).

Studies also have indicated that married female labour force participation increases pathological behaviors in their husbands (Faludi,1991; Harrell, 1985; Stack, 1985,1987; Trovato,1987; Trovato and Vos,1992). Faludi (1991) argues that "While the effects of the women's movement may not have depressed women, they did seem to trouble many men" (p.40). Several studies appear to support Faludi's arguement. Kessler and McRae, Jr. (1983) concluded from their review of thirty years of literature focusing on the sex differences in mental health, that "It is likely that men are experiencing more rapidly role-related stresses than are women. [...] While women's improving mental health stems from their rising employment rate, at the same time the increase in distress among men can be attributed, in part, to depression and loss of self-esteem related to the increasing tendency of women to take a job outside the home" (in Faludi,1991:40). Stanley, Hunt and Hunt (1986) conducted a study of 2,440 adults and found that "depression and low self-esteem among married men [was] closely associated with their wives' employment" (in Faludi,1991:41). Another study quoted by Faludi that was conducted by the federal Quality of Employment

Survey found that "dual earning may be experienced as a downward mobility for men and upward mobility for women. Husbands of working women had greater psychological distress, lower self-esteem, and greater depression than men wed to homemakers" (p.41).

(c) The Occupational Group

Durkheim argued that in the past, religious society regulated economic aspirations and desires keeping them within the limits of ones means. Religious doctrine regulated the economic desires of those with insufficient means from striving to be equitable with those of higher means. However, as religious society became disorganized, economic regulation became weak. Durkheim argued that industrialization hastened the pace of individualism and as a result, economic regulation deteriorated even more rapidly.

> Ultimately, this liberation of desires has been made worse by the very development of industry and the almost infinite extension of the market. So long as the producer could gain his profits only in his immediate neighborhood, the restricted amount of possible gain could not much overexcite ambition. Now that he may assume to have almost the entire world as his customer, how could passions accept their former confinement in the face of such limitless prospects? (pp.251-252).

However, individuals were not thrown completely into a state of anomie because they were still regulated by membership in occupational groups. In essence, the regulating functions once performed by the religious and the domestic institutions in society were usurped by the occupational group that one belonged to: "Since [the occupational group] consists of individuals devoted to the same tasks, with solidary or even combined interests, no soil is better calculated to bear social ideas and sentiments. [...] Thus the [occupational group] has everything needed to give the individual a setting, to draw him out of his state of moral isolation; and faced by the actual inadequacy of the other groups, it alone can fulfil this indispensable office" (Durkheim,1951[1897]:378-379). Therefore, the occupational group can be viewed as a society, capable of regulating individuals just as the religious society and the domestic society have. Viewing occupation as a society has important implications for the study of suicide, for as Durkheim states, "Occupations today absorb the major part of our collective forces..." (1960:29). Moreover, the lack of economic regulation is a major contributor in explaining the increase in anomic suicides.

Labor force participation regulates and integrates individuals so that individuals who are not in the labour force, namely those who are unemployed, have a higher tendency towards suicide than do those who are involved in the labour force. In much of the literature, unemployment rates are used as a proxy for economic anomie as it is assumed that unemployment is indicative of a loss of regulation and to some extent, a loss of integration. Much of the micro level literature indicates that there is a positive relationship between unemployment and suicide. However, there appears to be a lack of consensus in results at the macro level (Maris, 1969; Boor, 1980; Stack and Haas, 1984; Platt, 1984; South, 1984; Hassan and Tan,1989, Breault,1986). Breault (1986) did not find a statistically significant relationship between unemployment and suicide and Boor (1980), who did find a positive significant relationship, has been criticized for confining "his analysis to the zero-order correlations and [for] not performing a multivariate analysis" (Trovato, forthcoming, 1992:10).

Maris (1969) and Breed (1963) both found a positive relationship between unemployment and suicide. Maris (1969) found that "occupational retirement signifies not only a change in one's job status but also a change in the material basis for one's self-conception and in the external sources of order and discipline" (p.95). Maris analyzed 2,153 death certificates of all suicides committed in Cook County, Illinois, between the years of 1959 and 1963. Despite the limited data found on death certificates, Maris was able to empirically test some of Durkheim's hypotheses. In regards to occupational anomie, Maris found that suicides were committed more often between the hours of 5 to 7 p.m. on workdays than on non-workdays. Housewifes showed no significant weekend-workday variation. Maris concludes that:

> ...it appears that the work situation and fellow employees acted as a kind of constraining force on the would-be suicide....most suicides were reported immediately after the end of the workday when the individual was suddenly on his own. Thus, it is a reasonable hypothesis that the 5 to 7 p.m. suicides were in part a response to occupational anomie... (p.84).

Breed (1963) conducted a series of interviews concerning the suicides of 103 white males between the ages of 20 and 60 in New Orleans in order to determine "the differential effects of anomie on the several class strata and on types of individuals" (p.179). He was able to support and yet refine Durkheim's theory of anomic suicide by determining that "New Orleans white male suicides showed substantial problems associated with work, as seen in downward mobility, reduced income, unemployment and other job and business difficulties" (p.188). Moreover, Breed found that anomic suicides can occur during economic prosperity or economic hardship and while an individual is integrated in the economic society, especially if they have low-achievement performances.

(d). Summary

Although the literature appears to demonstrate a causal link between indicators of individualism and suicide rates, it fails to adequately explain the significant sex differential in the suicide rates. The literature implies that with modernization, rising individualism is experienced by both males and females and as such, both should be exposed to an increased risk of suicide. However, this is not the case. Suicide rates are significantly higher for males than for females in Quebec, as in most industrialized countries (see Appendix 1 for Quebec data). The question that needs to be asked is why this differential exists. The micro studies that were cited above indicate that in recent decades women are more individualistic than are men. Then why do women not commit suicide more than men, given the positive relationship between individualism and suicide as Durkheim postulated? It will be argued here that individualism does in fact increase the propensity for suicide but that individualism has had different outcomes for men and for women in that the sexes have historically had different integrating and regulating experiences.

CHAPTER 4. EXPLAINING THE SEX DIFFERENTIAL IN SUICIDE RATES

(a) Durkheim Re-examined

A common practice in the social sciences is to teach students classical theories as the foundation upon which they are to build their research. This is especially true in the area of sociology where empirical research is theory-laden and where the emphasis is on how the data support or does not support a particular theory. Sociological theories are often considered objectified forms of knowledge, a way of objectively knowing the world we live in[6]. Dorothy Smith (1990) argues that "as graduate students learning to become sociologists, we learn to think sociology as it is thought and to practice it as it is practiced...The boundaries of inquiry are thus set within the framework of what is already established" (pp.15-16). Although, there exists a debate within the discipline as to whether sociological theory can be value neutral[7], the fact that several theories are gender biased has been virtually ignored. As Gilligan (1982) states:

> At a time when efforts are being made to eradicate discrimination between the sexes in the search for social equality and justice, the differences between the sexes are being rediscovered in the social sciences. This discovery occurs when theories formerly considered to be sexually neutral in their scientific objectivity are found instead to

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[6] Dorothy Smith defines objectifies forms of knowledge as "the separation of knowers from what they know and in particular with the separation of what is known from knowers' interests, 'biases,' and so forth, that are not authorized by the discipline" (p.16).

[7] For an in depth discussion on the objectivity of sociological theory, see A.W. Gouldner (1975); R. Keat and J. Urry (1975); K. Mannheim (1952).

> reflect a consistent [masculine] observational and evaluative bias (p.6).

Classical theories, often conceptualized from a masculine point of view, have either ignored women in their social analysis or have relied on a normative biological argument when explaining differences between the sexes (Sydie,1987; Gilligan,1982). Smith (1990) argues that there exist two problems in the field of sociology:

> 1. ...how sociology is thought - its methods, conceptual schemes, and theories - has been based on and built up within the male social universe, even when women have participated in its doing.
> 2. ...the worlds opened up by speaking from the standpoint of women have not been and are not on a basis of equality with the objectified bodies of knowledge that have constituted and expressed the standpoint of men (p.13).

These two problems are interrelated in that "the effect of the second interacting with the first is to compel women to think their world in the concepts and terms in which men think theirs" (p.13). Thus, sociology often promotes masculine interpretations which has alienated women from their own experiences. It will be argued here that Durkheim's theory of suicide is a good example of a theory which explains women's experiences from a normative perspective and conceptualizes women as 'natural' biological beings.

Durkheim is considered a founding father of sociology and his analysis of suicide is often thought to be an important prototype of sociological research. However, Durkheim's failure to adequately explain the sex differential in suicide rates is primarily due to his reliance on a normative explanation based on a 'natural' division of labour. Sydie (1987) concludes her analysis of Durkheim's work on suicide by stating that "this belief in the invariable significance of biological difference means that the hierarchies of power in society, which relegate women collectively to a subordinate status to men, are taken as givens that do not require sociological analysis" (p.49). When we look at Durkheim's concepts of integration, regulation and collective conscience from a feminist perspective, a clearer understanding of the sex differential in suicide rates emerges than the one originally proposed by Durkheim.

Durkheim was aware that men and women have different interests which effected their propensity for suicide; men needed restraint whereas women required liberty (Durkheim, 1951[1897]: 274). However insightful this may appear, he contended that the different interests of the sexes were primarily due to their "...different organic and intellectual capacities" whereby women's nature was responsible for the "problematic difference between the sexes" (Sydie,1987:28,33). In essence, Durkheim argued that 'It was because of [the sex] role differentiation that women "recalled 'certain characteristics of primitive natures' and were generally less prone to suicide than were men" (Sydie,1987:28).

Durkheim's finding that married women have a higher propensity for suicide than married men was problematic for him as he felt that marriage was the 'natural' place for women. Hence, his normative bias created both theoretical and methodological problems in his analysis on suicide. His attempt to reconcile this dilemma was to rely on a biological argument. For example, he states that men's sexual desires need to be socially restrained through the institution of marriage whereas women's sexual desires are biologically restrained because women are a 'more instinctive creature' and thus, "enclosing woman in marriage with no hope of divorce, the regulation of a women's sexual needs is unnecessarily stringent, and marriage becomes a 'restraint to her without any great advantage'" (Sydie,1987:29). Sydie argues that this 'natural' dichotomy of sex roles coincides with Durkheim's argument on the division of labour whereby men are viewed as being more socialized than women:

> Man is 'almost entirely the product of society' while woman is 'to a far greater extent the product of nature. His tastes, aspirations and humor have in large part a collective origin, while his companion's are more directly influenced by her organism. His needs, therefore, are quite different from hers, [...] (Durkheim,in Sydie,1987:33).

In this sense, if marriage could be strengthened and divorce made more unattainable, male suicide rates would decline. This remedy however, presents a dilemma for Durkheim, because if marriage is to be strengthened to the benefit of men, it will simultaneously be to the detriment of women. For example, Durkheim asks, "'Must one of the sexes necessarily be sacrificed, and is the solution only to choose the lesser of the two evils?' It seems that the answer is yes to both questions and that the lesser evil is to make marriage more indissoluble, [...] " (Sydie, 1987:32).

Thus, Durkheim concluded that the sex differentiation found in the suicide rates is the result of natural and normative factors that predispose men and women to different experiences.

> Women are governed more by their natural, biological impulses, and their mental capacity is seen to be less well developed than that of men. Thus, they are meant to be

> fulfilled by their domestic role in modern society. But domesticity produces unhappy women. [...] Men, in contrast, find the conjugal family an important antidote to the anomie that threatens them in their public occupational life. [...] Women simply represented an anomaly that some adjustment to the division of labour could, he hoped, rectify (Sydie, 1987:33).

Durkheim also suggested that egoistic and anomic suicides would decrease if occupational life could be reorganized so that it integrated its workers more sufficiently. However, as Sydie points out, this suggestion again would have detrimental consequences for women: "Unless Durkheim meant to include women as full partners in the occupational, public realm, then the reorganization of occupational life would be of little benefit to women" (pp.31-32).

What is being argued here is that the study of suicide relying on Durkheim's concepts of integration and regulation as analytical tools is useful but the theory in which Durkheim grounds these concepts needs to be seriously re-examined. The use of a normative theory to explain sex role differentiation often presupposes a natural position which preserves the relationship of women to men as similar to the relationship between material objects and their owner.

If we accept that Durkheim is accurate when he states that the level of integration and regulation are important indicators of a society's propensity for suicide, then it must be assumed that integration and regulation must somehow differ for men and for women, since there is a significant sex differentiation in their suicide rates. However, the difference between men's and women's tendency towards suicide is not a function of women's natural instincts which protect them from suicide but because women's roles have been determined and regulated by these 'natural' attitudes. Thus, the sex differential in suicide rates can be explained by the fact that women and men have historically had different collective ties which have been regulated by culturally defined sex appropriate norms. When applied specifically to Quebec women, we can see the consequences of such normative attitudes in their shaping of a different pattern of integration and regulation for women than for men. It is proposed then, that the sex differential in suicide rates can be explained by different integrating and regulating structures for women that result from a patriarchal normative order and not from women's 'natural' differences as originally proposed by Durkheim.

(b). Current Suicide Research and Normative Biases

Although many studies have found support for Durkheim's suicide theory, very few studies have addressed the substantial sex difference in the suicide rates, a phenomenon that is present in most industrialized countries, and of the few that have, their explanations are somewhat inadequate. These studies continue to be normatively biased in that they either validate women's 'natural' roles in society or they misconstrue the realities experienced by women in the domestic realm. What needs to be questioned is the constitution of normative society, and the perspective from which this constitution is generated. Normative behavior, usually defined by the status quo, implies 'good society'. Any behavior that is not normatively sanctioned is defined as deviant. This is made quite apparent in several analyses which postulate that the women's movement of the 1960's and 70's will lead to a convergence of women's and men's pathological behavior as women's lifestyles become more like those of men's. (Dublin, 1963; Adler,1975; Bell,1977; Kessler and McRae,1981; R. Davis,1981). Kushner (1985) states that "the dominant explanations for the lower incidence of suicide among women suggest that male suicide results from the stresses inherent in men's roles and responsibilities, while female suicide occurs when women deviate from their less conflicted roles and status" (p.542). Dublin (1963) argues that women who commit suicide are maladjusted and must have experienced "a marked increase in ..schooling and employment... Greater economic and social independence... played a role" (in Kushner; 1985:541). R. Davis (1981) also finds a positive correlation between female labour force participation and female suicide rates. These studies often imply that female suicides are the result of deviations from traditional role expectations. However, as Steffensmeier (1984) concludes from her research on suicide and the contemporary woman: "the Women's Movement appears to have reversed a trend of gradually rising suicide rates among women..." (p.621).

Other studies have conceptualized full-time housewives as 'angels of the home' whereby the ideal wife and mother finds fulfilment in motherhood, in her responsibility as a doting wife and in her domestic duties. This normative interpretation has created the illusion of housewives as "leading an easy, comfortable life, that was much less difficult than those of their forebears and of their husbands" (Clio Collective,1987:347) or, on the opposite side, as leading lives that are "boring and underdeveloped" (Gerson,1986:34).

These normative images can often lead to simplistic and misconstrued research findings in that they fail to address the realities of housework. Kushner (1985) argues that "Those women who kill themselves after a man deserts them do so [...] because they can no longer fulfil their social functions as mothers and wives" (p.542). Oakley (1981:176) maintains that a common conclusion reached in research is that "'the private neurosis of housewives is depression, a psychiatric label that most adequately hides the social fact of the housewifes' loneliness, low self-esteem and work dissatisfaction' (in Wilson,1986:59). Sainsbury (1955) reached the conclusion that "When the biological and social roles of the two sexes are compared, the female role appears more precisely, and her biological and social functions more harmonized. ... Thus, the 'male's more arduous social role' explains 'the marked liability of the male' for suicide as opposed to females" (in Kushner, 1985:542).

What needs to be examined are the social realities experienced by women rather than defined by the normative attitude. Interpreting female suicide rates in terms of the masculinization process of women brought about by the Women's Movement only obscures the actual experiences of women and steers research away from the very objectives that it has set out to discover. By linking the women's movement to the masculinization of women and thus concluding that the male/female suicide ratio will converge is an attempt to homogenize male and female experiences. Although this may make research easier to conduct, it also distorts the every day experiences of women and conceptualizes the women's movement as pathological in nature.

Steffensmeier (1984) analyzed American nationwide statistics on White suicide rates for the years 1960-1978 in order to "assess whether the suicide rates of women are increasing relative to those of men" (613). She argues that the 'simplistic hypothesis' linking women's suicide rates with the women's movement is not supported by data and concludes from her study that "there is convincing evidence that the labour force participation of married women is beneficial for their mental health because it relieves the isolation and loneliness of housewifery. [...] " (p.623). Cumming et. al. (1975) found that married women who work have lower suicide rates than those married women who do not work. They conclude that:

> It is altogether possible that concern over the difficulty of the women's role has been off target. Overwork is debilitating, underpayment is humiliating, and incompatible expectations are frustrating, but perhaps none of these very real pressures are as damaging as isolation, loneliness, and lack of social integration [found in the domestic realm] (in Steffensmeier; 1984:624).

Trovato and Vos (1992) tested "for the effect of married female labour force participation (MFLFP) on both male and female suicide propensities in Canada for the periods 1971 and 1981 in order to extend the American based literature on this topic" (Trovato and Vos, 1992:1). They found that MFLFP was positively related to suicide for both genders in 1971 but was negatively related to suicide in 1981. They conclude that "as women move away from traditional roles, and as society adjusts to this new reality, suicide risk declines not only for women, but also for men" (p.17). They explain that this decline in suicide propensity for both genders in 1981 is due to the benefits obtained when the wife works. "As more married women entered the labor force, households benefitted from the additional income provided by working wives, thus enhancing well-being among family members. Women gained self-esteem due to their economic independence and their expanding formal and informal affiliations outside of the home" (p.16).

Traditionally, the domestic realm has been a realm of connections. However, as more women have entered the labour force, women at home have experienced a decrease in their integrating networks as well as a lack of empathy in terms of the problematic nature of housework. Ferree (1980) maintains that full-time "housework becomes more isolated and less rewarding without the congeniality of neighbourhood groups" and that as women in the labour force have become more the norm, the role of full-time housekeeper has declined in social value (in Wilson, 1986:59). Wilson states that "Since a housewife's chores are often not considered work, her frustrations and fatigue are not often acknowledged. One of the more negative aspects of the job of housewife is isolation" (1986:59). Luxton (1987) argues that inequality in the labour place has been collectively addressed and changes have been made by organized groups but inequality in the domestic realm has virtually been ignored in that "...to date the change has been acted out on the level of the individual household..." (p.224). Thus, full-time homemakers today often feel a sense of isolation as their support networks with other women have decreased and as the importance of the home-maker role has become less socially recognized. The isolation, inequality and drudgery of housework have been socially unrecognized, leaving housewives to struggle with these issues on an individual basis. As the Clio Collective (1987:335) have argued, "it is not easy to speak out against a condition that people proclaim to be natural and universal."

Although women tend to be more integrated than men overall, women in the labour force today tend to have more connections than those women who are full-time housewives. Ferree (1980) argues that the "endemic devaluation of housework may mean that women at all status levels may increasingly need to seek a paid job to meet essential psychological as well as financial needs... While it would be a mistake to glamorize paid employment, it has one important advantage: it provides social contact" (in Wilson,1986:59). Thus, it can be argued that rather than leading to pathological consequences as predicted by normatively biased research, female labour force participation has decreased women's propensity to suicide primarily because the labour force offers women another source of integration.

(c) Men and Women in Historical Perspective: The Quebec Case.

It has been well established that women's suicide rates have been and continue to be significantly lower than those of men's. The reason for this differential can be explained by focusing on the different historical experiences women and men have had in terms of integration in and regulation by the social system.

In industrial society, men have basically two sources of integration and regulation, namely their family and their occupation. When either is disrupted, men are at risk of experiencing anomie and/or egoism. One of the strongest ties to a collectivity for men is found with the family. A man's relationship with his family, and especially his relationship with his wife, regulate his behavior but more importantly, the family is relied upon to ensure his emotional well-being (Rubin,1983). Sermat and Smyth (1973) found that "when males choose to disclose, they usually do so with women and not with other men. The females to whom males choose to disclose are usually close relatives or friends (mothers, girlfriends, or wives). In fact, males generally look upon males who are disclosers with some skepticism (in Doyle,1983:119). If the marital union is dissolved, men often have no other recourse for personal interaction or support, and thus are more prone to suicide. This explains Durkheim's findings that married men have lower suicide rates than single men but when experiencing divorce, men's suicide rates far exceed those of single men.

A man's occupation is also important in lowering his propensity for suicide. Men are regulated by the occupational collectivity but integration is only at a superficial level. Doyle (1983) argues that men very seldom interact with their co-workers on a personal level and thus, their ties to the group are weak. He explains that men have limited personal relationships with their co-workers because most "males see everything in their world in terms of competition" (p.165).

> If there are just so many testaments to a man's success-a very valued element in the male sex role-then every other man out there is a potential rival for the limited and available proofs of manly success. There are, for example, just so many large offices with windows, so many promotions, so many perks, or so many gold rings on the merry-go-round of life. [...] Men quickly learn ways to make their own track record look better than other men's. [...] The race for success is on, and every man soon learns the cardinal rule: 'Don't trust the other guy, even your best friend, beause he's after the same limited prize that you are.]...] Thus competition forces many men to define part of their male sex role in terms of their acquiring "limited" goods as proof of their masculinity, to view every other man as a potential rival for these goods, and to believe that competition is always good for men (Doyle,1983:165-166).

Because success at their employment is so important to most males, their self definition is often derived from their occupation. Rubin (1983) argues that when asked 'who are you', men will invariably state their occupation, (I am a teacher; I am a policeman; etc.) (Rubin,1983:162). When men face unemployment they loose perspective of who they are, and consequently, their suicide rates increase.

Cumming and Lazer (1981) suggest that before marriage, men are normatively integrated with kin members but it it only through marriage, that they acquire interactive affiliations. "Marriage then, creates interactive affiliations for men where they had previously had only normative ties, while it only enlarges the interactive arena for women who have consistently acted out their normative ties" (p.278). They argue that because kinship membership is advantageous to women before and after marriage, women have a lower tendency towards suicide. Moreover, they maintain that kinship structure explains why men benefit more from marriage than do women.

Individualism for men can be defined as "favoring the separateness of the individual self over connection to others, and leaning more toward an autonomous life of work than toward the interdependence of love and care" (Gilligan, 1982:17). A male definition of self and his place in the collective centers on power and on success, and as such, is competitive and almost narcissistic in nature. Lasch (1979) explains that when the emphasis is placed on the individual and away from the collective, "it should not surprise us to find that although [a man] conforms to social norms for fear of external retribution, he often thinks of himself as an outlaw and sees others in the same way..." (p.103). These characteristics have been necessary for the patriarch to maintain the status quo. However, they are also debilitating in terms of providing men with integrating and regulating support networks. This is made apparent by Gilligan (1982) who argues that for men, the normative order promotes "separation, autonomy, individuation, and natural rights" (1982:23). She concludes that "Power and separation secure the man in an identity achieved through work, but they leave him at a distance from others, who seem in some sense out of his sight" (1982:163). Miller (1976) similarly argues that "When the focus on individuation and individual achievement extends into adulthood and maturity is equated with personal autonomy, concern with relationships appears as a weakness of women rather than as a human strength" (in Gilligan, 1982:17).

Women, on the other hand, have had a different experience. The normative attitude entrenched women in a life of extreme regulation. Every aspect of a woman's life, every role that she performed, was regulated by this natural attitude. Women were not integrated into the public realm except by virtue of their husbands. However, the domestic realm was a realm of connections and gemeinschaft features. There were strong normative expectations that women cultivate friendships with other women and to develop strong connections to female kin and to religious society. Thus, women were highly integrated in domestic society, the religious society and with friendship relations, all of which protected women from excess individualism and which contributed to a lower propensity for suicide. However, these relationships were also overly regulated and although it protected them from suicide, the degree of regulation also kept women in a life of oppression.

It was normatively expected for women to flourish in the domestic realm as this was seen as their proper sphere, as determined by their natural abilities to be nurturers. These attitudes, which were later refered to as the the 'feminine mystique' by Betty Friedan (1977), prevailed in Quebec before the 1970's. "Advocates of the feminine mystique proclaimed that, in a house with 'all the modern conveniences,' such easy work could be creative and fulfilling" (The Clio Collective, 1987:302). In Quebec, as in most of the western world:

> Women were responsible for the emotional problems of their children; women were sexually passive; women were doomed to frigidity; menstrual periods were 'the tears of a

> disappointed uterus'; menopause was an expression of women's regret at being no longer able to bear children....Most women did not identify with these theories, but to question them was evidence of an unconscious desire to be a man! (The Clio Collective; 1987:320).

Thus, the roles of housewife and mother were extremely regulated by the normative attitude. Even if a woman worked outside the home, "...male rhetoric generally portrayed her as somewhat improper" (The Clio Collective; 1987: 307). Contrary to Durkheim, who stated that females were less in need of regulation than were men because of their natural instincts, Quebec women were over-regulated because of patriarchal structures that enforced the normative ideology on the basis of those "natural" instincts.

> The laws that concerned women were based on the concept of "natural law," and women had been badly served by natural law. Indeed, the cultural models that defined the lives, roles, rights and duties of women were so old that society considered them to be natural. The long list of attributes women allegedly possessed "naturally' is astonishing: devotion, forgiveness, faithfulness and sensitivity are but a few. Some activities were thought to come to women "naturally"- embroidery, mending, looking after children and infants, housework and laundry. Legal systems based on such presumptions imprisoned women, but women felt powerless to argue against these cultural models (The Clio Collective; 1987: 324).

During the 1950's and the early 60's the 'feminine mystique' enveloped Quebec to such a degree that even if housewives did complain of their lack of participation in the public realm, they were quickly told "to overcome their boredom and adjust to the role society expected of them. Men [even] explained what women were feeling: one radio program aimed at women was called "Un homme vous exoute" ("A Man is Listening to You") (The Clio Collective:

1987:335). Thus, women remained in collective silence as their roles continued to be regulated by the 'natural order'.

The Quiet Revolution, which occured in Quebec during the 1960's, emphasized among other things, individual advancement and women began to experience changes which deviated from the normative order. Women in Quebec began to participate in the public realm to a far greater degree. However, their participation was conditional; "they could become involved in socio-political issues and artistic and cultural matters, so long as they remained *anges du foyer* (angels of the home). They could become active in any number of associations, provided that their children and husbands were not inconvenienced" (The Clio Collective,1987: 303).

Despite these conditions, changes were being made. Women started to practice birth control as never before. Consequently, the birth rate dramatically decreased. Rather than leading to pathological consequences as predicted by Durkheim, women began to flourish with their new found freedom. The ability to control fertility gave women more access to the public realm which increased their integration into new roles, especially in the labour force. However, women's roles continued to be extremely regulated even after the Quiet Revolution. The academic areas that students chose to specialize in and their choice of occupations continued to reflect the natural order. Even when women did enter into traditional male occupations, they found themselves delegated to the lower ranks.

> The situation did not change with the arrival, in the job market, of the new women graduates of the Quiet Revolution.

> In 1979, women made up one-third of Quebec's huge public service. Two percent of these women held upper-echelon positions. (Even these worked primarily as executive assistants.) [...] But 56 percent of Quebec's women public servants were office workers [...]. Discrimination in the public service mirrored Quebec society as a whole. The Quiet Revolution reproduced the traditional double standard, though in a new guise (The Clio Collective; 1987:327).

Thus, labour force participation did not necessarily mean equality. "Women had little success overcoming cultural and social constraints in moving in new career directions" (The Clio Collective; 1987:328). From the moment of birth, girls were being directed into traditional female roles. "They learn their roles early, and society - parents, educators, books and even career-guidance literature - conspires to regulate those roles" (The Clio Collective; 1987:330). As a result, many occupations that were available to women were merely an extension of their domestic roles. The Quiet Revolution may have brought about educational reform but the normative attitude still specified the types of jobs that women were to occupy, and as such, dictated the educational training that females received. Thus, the conclusion reached by the Clio Collective (1987) appears appropriate: "In education, the Quiet Revolution had truly been achieved on the backs of women" (p.331).

The 1970's saw the resurgence of a collective female consciousness as women joined together as never before. Feminism was awakened in Quebec as women began to question the 'natural' order. Feminists argued that the time had come for all women to discover "the new reality of female experience that only other women could really share" (The Clio Collective; 1987:355). Feminists urged that women needed to question their roles in marriage, the labour force, in education, in the family and in society overall. What had previously been defined as normative behavior and 'the good society' needed to be re-evaluated by women themselves rather than by those who wanted to preserve the status quo. "Women came to discover that there was no reason "normal" should be equated with masculine norms set by men, and no reason women should be evaluated by male standards. [...] This new concept of autonomy placed individual growth before self-sacrifice, a revolutionary idea in Quebec, where sacrifice was almost synonymous with femininity" (The Clio Collective, 1987:356-357). For women, a qualitatively distinct form of collective conscience arose and became stronger as more and more women were drawn together in their fight for equality. Women began to take on new roles but did not abandon their old roles. Rubin (1983) explains that this is a major factor in explaining why women and men differ. Whereas a man's definition of self is anchored solely to his occupation, "For a woman, [...], even a deeply integrated professional commitment doesn't displace family concerns and relationships from the center of her life and thought"(p.162).

For most of the 1960's there were no feminist groups and as such feminism was not organized (Clio Collective, 1987:314). However, this radically changed during the latter part of the 1960's and early 1970's. Women became a collective force that demanded recognition as women's groups began to form and grow at unprecedented rates. For example, the Quebec Federation of Women, which was created in 1966, provided Quebec women with "a political platform to support their demands. [...] The Quebec Federation of

Women, became the operations central for most Quebec's women's associations" (Clio Collective, 1987:338). The federation grew to over a hundred thousand members as approximately fifty three newly formed women's groups became associated with it (Ibid:341). Creating a strong solidarity, these groups were instrumental in bringing about some changes. For example, the Action-Travail des femmes (Women Workers' Action Group) and the Associatin feminine pour l'education et l'action sociale (AFEAS) addressed inequality in the labour force. They demanded equal pay for equal work, and the 'Quebec Charter of Rights and Freedoms' followed.

CHAPTER 5. HYPOTHESIS, DATA, METHODS OF ANALYSIS AND PRELIMINARY ANALYSIS

(a). Hypothesis

It has been argued here that the high suicide rates in Quebec can be explained as a result of changing integrating factors associated with 'the Quiet Revolution', which contributed to increased individualism and a decline in certain forms of collectivity, namely domestic and religious collective life. Therefore, we should find that suicide rates significantly increase after the 1960's. Moreover, Durkheim proposed that individualism inevitably weakens the collective conscience. However, it has been argued here that it is unlikely that there ever existed an unified form of collective conscience. The normative order, in treating the sexes separately, has led to different integrating and regulating experiences for most men and women. As a result, these different experiences have led to two distinct and separate conceptions of collective conscience. For a majority of women, the collective conscience contributes to the feeling that as a woman, she is integrated into a collectivity that is larger than herself. Today, women can be characterized as being less regulated than in the past, yet women remain more collectively integrated than men. These female collective ties, which became even stronger for many with the advent of feminism, protect women from excessive individualism and from suicide. Thus, a new form of collective conscience arose out of women's autonomy from the normative order uniting most women whereas for most men, individualism based on power and autonomy, has weakened the collective conscience, leaving them isolated from one another. In essence, individualism for men has stood up to Durkheim's prediction: the male collective conscience has weakened as men have become less integrated and less regulated. Therefore, for men, individualism can be said to be pathological in nature whereas for women, individualism can be conceptualized in terms of breaking away from the 'natural' order and discovering their autonomy as women. In essence, such individualism is not alienating for women but it is for men.

The general hypothesis is derived from the above assumption that integration and regulation must differ for men and for women since there is a significant sex differentiation in their suicide rates. It has been argued here that the Quiet Revolution led to a change in ideology away from traditional forms of collectivity, such as that based on the family, the church and the economic group. Applying our reformulation of Durkheim's conception of sex roles and suicide, it is predicted that these collective changes should have a profound effect on male suicide rates since these forms of collectivity are the primary sources of integration for men. Conversely, changes in traditional forms of collectivity should not have an effect on female suicide rates because sources of integrative connections for women far exceed those of men, both in quality and in quantity. In addition to maintaining collective bonds between women, a breakdown in traditional forms of collectivity, especially those forms of collectivity that were normatively sanctioned, has accelerated the birth of new forms of integration for women such as participation in the labour force and in education. Therefore, the hypothesis to be tested in this study is that prior to the Quiet Revolution, (the pre-Quiet Revolution period), the effects of the predictor variables (religiosity, unemployment, married female labour force participation, childlessness and divorce) on suicide will not be significant for either sex. However, during the Post-Quiet Revolution period, the effects of predictor variables will vary by gender, whereby the effects will be positive for males and not significant for females.

(b). Data and Methods of Analysis.

Six variables, representing the various aspects of the phonomenon, as mentioned in the hypothesis above, are evaluated with the use of data from the Censuses of Canada, 1931 to 1986 and from corresponding Vital Statistics, also from the same years, unless otherwise stated. An unpublished Statistics Canada tabulation of Quebec's age-sex specific suicide counts for five-year periods between 1931 and 1986 is used as the basis for this analysis. Published Census tabulations for the same time periods were used to obtain the age-sex specific populations at risk. The following six variables were selected as operationalizations of the major dimensions of the individualism concept: (1) the proportion of individuals that report "no religion" in the census when asked for their religious affiliation; (2) unemployment rates; (3) proportion of married women in the labor force; (4) proportion of married women reporting 'no children'; (5) percent of population who are divorced. The above measures were computed per 1,000 age-sex specific population for five year intervals over the time period of 1931-1986 (depending on available data)[8]. The age groupings used are as follows: 15-19, 20-24, 25-34, 35-44, 45-54, 55-64, 65 plus. Although these predictor variables are being treated here as independent from one another, it should be noted that they are probably highly interdependent, as they all relate to the same latent concept of individualism.

To test the effects of religiosity on suicide, a proxy of religious integration is used, which is the percent of the age-sex specific population who stated 'no religion' in the census from 1931-1986[9]. Because the religious variable is only recorded every ten years by the Census, logarithmic interpolation was used to derive an estimate for the years 1936, 1946, 1956, 1966, 1976 and 1986. This method assumes that changes in 'no religion' over time follows an exponential trend. In fact, graphic presentation of this variable conforms to an exponential trend. To test the effects of economic anomie, the unemployment rates for the years 1971 to 1986, and the proportion of the population who reported that they were unable to find work for the earlier years is used. Again logarithmic interpolation was used to derive an estimate for the years these data were not collected by Statistics Canada.

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[8] When there was missing data for a particular year, logarithmic interpolation was used to derive an estimate for the misssing data.

[9] Religiosity is often measured by church attendance but since Canada Census and Vital Statistics do not include these data, the proportion of the population who report 'no religion' will be used as a measure of religiosity. This is supported by Trovato (1988): "The degree to which persons claim that they do not belong to any religious denomination is interpreted to reflect what Stack calls religious individualism" (p.512). Moreover, it should be noted that indicators such as church attendance, 'no religion', etc. are imperfect indicators of Durkheim's concept of religious integration, but to date, they are the best, if not the only ones available (for further discussion see Breault and Kposowa,1987).

The effects of the domestic integration are tapped by the following variables: the proportion of the married female population who were actively participating in the paid labour force; the proportion of married women who reported to have zero children; and the proportion of the age-sex specific Quebec population who stated that they were divorced for the census years 1931-1986. In terms of the latter measurement, divorce statistics by age and sex are unavailable before 1971, and as such a measure of prevalence was used although a measure of incidence would have been the prefered measure.

All the data conform to the cross-tabular structure: ***Time x Age x Sex.*** Therefore, the unit of analysis is the Time·Age·Sex specific cell in this tabulation. The data are analyzed with a log-linear model appropriate for the analysis of rates. Sex specific equations for the pre-Quiet Revolution years, defined as 1931-1956, and the post-Quiet Revolution years defined as 1961-1986, are computed separately in order to better observe the effects of covariates on suicide.[10] There are two equations for the pre-Quiet Revolution period: one for females and another for males, which assume the following form:

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[10] 1966 is a pivotal point for this analysis as it marks the beginning of the post-Quiet Revolution period. "During the 1960's, Quebec society changed radically. As education and health services became available to everyone, traditions were generally abondoned; many people began to leave the Church.[...] After 1964, the pace of modernization quickened" (Clio Collective, 1987: 275). Thus, before the Quiet Revolution, Quebec could be characterized as a society entrenched in traditional forms of collectivity; society was quite homogenious (highly integrated) so that unemployment, divorce, etc. could not possibly have negative effects on the suicide rates of either genders. However, social integration broke down with the advent of the Quiet Revolution, more for men than for women, whereby rapid modernization transformed French Canadian society to one based more on individualism.

$$\ln(S_{ij}/P_{ij}) = \lambda + \sum_{i=1}^{I=7}\lambda_{YEAR} + \sum_{j=1}^{J=7}\lambda_{AGE} + \lambda_{NOREL} + \lambda_{UNEMP} + \lambda_{MFLFP} + \lambda_{CHILD} + \lambda_{\ln(DIV)}$$

where:

S_{ij} = the number of suicides by year and age,

P_{ij} = the year-age specific population,

λ = the average of the natural logarithm of suicide rates (intercept term).

λ_{YEAR} = the parameters for year, (I=1,...,5), $\Sigma\lambda_{YEAR}=0$,

λ_{AGE} = the parameters for the age groups (K=1,...7), $\Sigma\lambda_{AGE}=0$,

λ_{NOREL} = the parameter for the proportion of the population who reported 'no religion' (Linear term, taken as deviation from its mean)

λ_{UNEMP} = the parameter for unemployment expressed as the population who reported to be unemployed or looking for work. (Linear term, taken as deviation from its mean)

λ_{MFLFP} = the parameter for married labour force participation rates, expressed as the number of married women in the labour force by the number of persons in the labour force. (Linear term, taken as deviation from its mean)

λ_{CHILD} = the parameter for childlessness, expressed as the proportion of married women who reported to have zero children. (Linear term, taken as deviation from its mean)

$\lambda_{\ln(DIV)}$ = the parameter for the natural logarithm of the proportion of the population divorced. (Linear term, taken as deviation from its mean)

The lambda effects measures the extent to which a given covariate adds to or subtracts from the overall suicide rate (depending on whether the parameter is positive or negative). YEAR was included in the equation in order to de-trend the series of the LINEAR time trend in suicide rates. The natural logarithm of divorce was used for the post-Quiet Revolution time period in order to overcome the curvilinear effects of divorce on suicide. The probability of divorce increases with age, peaking at ages 35-44, and then decreases significantly with advancing age. Given this pattern of divorce by age, the association of divorce with suicide by age, was also observed to be curvilinear. By taking the natural logarithm of divorce, the problem of curvilinearity is minimized. Since both 'y' and 'x' are expressed as logarithms, the interpretation of the parameter is somewhat different that that explained above. Here, log(suicide), log(divorce) gives λ a relative measure of a one percent increase in divorce leading to a certain percent change in suicide rate. Therefore, in this case, λ becomes an elasticity coefficient. It was not necessary to take the natual logarithm of divorce for the pre-Quiet Revolution time period as the proportion of the population who were divorced was very small across all the age groups. Preliminary analysis also indicated that in the post-QR period, there is a problem of collinearity between unemployment and childlessness. In order to circumvent this problem, two equations will be run for the post-QR period; one which excludes childlessness and one that excludes unemployment. Thus, there is a total of four equations for the post QR period: (1) females, without 'Unemployment' effect, (2) males, without 'Unemployment' effect, (3) females, without 'Childlessness' effect, (4) males, without 'Childlessness' effect.

The parameters are computed by Maximum Likelihood Estimation (MLE) with the SPSSX LOGLINEAR subroutine. This procedure avoids problems of heteroskedasticity found in preliminary OLS regression analysis. The two different time periods, the pre- and post- Quiet Revolution, were chosen because they represent two diverse social environments. The pre-Quiet Revolution can be characterized as a period of time of high social integration whereby norms and values stressed the importance of religion and domestic life. The Catholic Church played a dominant role in this regard. In contrast, the post-Quiet Revolution can be characterized as a time of shifting norms and values, namely from a period which stressed collective life to one of individual advancement. With the advent of the Quiet Revolution, educational attainment, divorce, MFLFP and childlessness dramatically increased whereas religiosity notably decreased. These two distinctly different time periods should provide a framework from which to examine the effects of diminishing social integration and increasing individualism on suicide rates.

A common argument in regards to conducting quantitative research on suicide is that the validity of suicide statistics is questionable at best, and totally biased at worst, rendering hypothesis testing impossible. This problem may be particularly true for predominantly Catholic regions, such as Quebec, where the degree of underreporting may be unusually large due to the moral and religious stigma attached to suicide (Douglas,1967; Kitsuse and Cicourel,1963). However, the result of several data evaluation studies do not support this claim (Pescosolido and Mendelsohn,1986:

80). Even when systematic underreporting in the official statistics is taken into account hypothesis testing is not significantly affected (Pescosolido and Mendelsohn,1986; Charron, 1982; Sainsbury,1983; Malla and Hoenig,1983; National Task Force on Suicide in Canada,1987; Sainsbury and Jenkins,1982). Pescosolido and Mendelsohn (1986) used several techniques to examine the role of misclassification on the analysis of the social causes of suicide. They compared four different equations; one where they examined the effects of social correlates on suicide with no correction for misreporting and for the remaining three equations they used different methods to control statistically for systematic misreporting. They concluded the following:

> Suicides do, in fact, appear to be consistently underreported, and this is related to the legal and organizational character of agencies responsible for classifying deaths. We find, however, that misreporting has little effect on the relationship between suicide rates and indicators of concepts in sociological theories of suicide. Whether or not misreporting is taken into account, the coefficients of social causation factors have the same sign and the same approximate magnitude. Despite the fact that suicides may be unilaterally underreported, we find that this makes very little difference in unraveling the fundamental causes of suicide...(p.94).

Charron (1982) reached a similar conclusion from his research in which he examined whether the increase in Quebec's suicide rates from 1971 to 1980 was the result of changes in underreporting. He discovered that eighty percent of this increase was due to "suicidal death by firearms, hanging and poisoning as contrasted with the very small and stable rates of accidental death attributed to these three methods" (in Cormier and Klerman, 1985:112). When Malla and

Hoenig (1983) controlled for the possibility of underreporting, they found that Newfoundland continued to have a suicide rate that was less than half of the Canadian rate. Sainsbury (1983) examined the suicide rates in Ireland and again found that underreporting was minimum and that Ireland still had fairly low suicide rates.

The validity of Quebec's suicide rates, especially the dramatic increase in the suicide rates from the pre-Quiet Revolution period to the post-Quiet Revolution period, is also strengthened theoretically. It would be expected that the homogeneity of French Canadian culture in the pre-Quiet Revolution period would inhibit suicide in Quebec. In fact, Quebec's suicide rates only significantly changed after the Quiet Revolution, in a context of other social change, such as the dramatic rise in divorces, childlessness, unemployment, married female labour force participation and in the proportion of the population with no religious affiliation. It is the argument of this thesis that these changes have had an effect on weakening collective life in Quebec and thus exposing the population to an increased risk of suicide; prior to the early sixties society was generally stable and homogeneous, and suicide was rare. When all of the literature, both empirical and theoretical, are taken into account, the suicide rates used in this analysis are considered to be valid. Some underreporting may have occurred in the pre-Quiet Revolution period, but it is unlikely that this would invalidate the findings of this analysis.

CHAPTER 6. RESULTS

This chapter consists of the results from the hypothesis testing for the two time periods. First, the age-sex specific means of each variable and the zero-order correlations are discussed which is followed by a discussion of the results from the log-rate analysis.

(a) Zero-order Correlations

As postulated, the increase in Quebec's suicide rates over time can be attributed to a substantive rise in male rather than female suicide. In fact, males experienced an increase in suicide rates between the two time periods of 118 percent whereas females experienced a 95 percent increase. The overall suicide rate for males in in the pre-Quiet Revolution (QR) time period was 10.09 per 100,000 males and in the post-Quiet Revolution time period, this rate had increased to 22.00 (see Table 1). For females, the suicide rate changed from 3.45 in in the pre-QR period to 6.72 in the post-QR. The ratio of male to female suicide rates was 2.92 in the pre-QR period and 3.32 in the post-QR period.

The mean for the 'no religion' variable increased for males from 3.34 per 1,000 in the pre QR to 18.06 in the post QR and increased for females from 2.64 in the per QR to 12.05 in the post QR. Divorce prevalence increased for females from a mean of 0.52 per 1,000 in the first time period to a mean of 15.60 in the second time period and for men, increased from 0.53 to 11.27, respectively. The ratio of male to female, then, was 1.02 in the pre-QR period and 0.72 in the post-QR period.

MFLFP and unemployment also increased for the two time periods (see Table 1). MFLFP increased from a mean of 22.12 per 1000 married women in the pre QR time period to a mean of 172.03 per 1000 married women in the post QR. The average unemployment rate for males remained virtually unchanged for the two time periods (64.80 and 65.38 per 1000, respectively) whereas it increased for females from a mean of 13.27 per 1000 women in the pre-QR period to a mean of 42.47 for the post QR. Childlessness appears to have also significantly increased by the post QR time period (98.95 and 117.43 per 1000 married women, respectively). The most dramatic increase in childlessness was for the age group 20-24 which experienced an increase from 110.82 in the pre-QR period to 228.46 for the post-QR period.

The zero-order correlations and corresponding descriptive statistics for the indicators of individualism are displayed in Table 2. Most of the indicators of individualism are in the predicted direction with the following exceptions: 'unemployment' was negative for males in the pre-QR time period and 'childlessness' for females was negative for the post-QR period. All the other variables were' positive for both males and females in both time periods.

All the correlations increase in magnitude in the post-Quiet Revolution period for both sexes with the exceptions of divorce for males and childlessness for females (see table 2). In addition, all the associations were significant at the .01 level with the exceptions of unemployment and childlessness for females in the pre-QR period (P=.175 and P=.105) and age and childlessness for females in the post-QR period (P=.408 and P=.454).

For the pre-Quiet Revolution, divorce, MFLFP and 'no religion' have the strongest zero-order associations with suicide for both males and females. Thus, suicide risk increases with a parallel increase in divorce, MFLFP and 'no religion'. For the post-Quiet Revolution, MFLF is the strongest predictor of suicide for both genders. The next strongest correlations for males are 'no religion' and divorce and for women, divorce and 'no religion'.

(b) Log-Rate Analysis

The log-rate regression equations for males and females before the Quiet Revolution (pre-QR) are presented in Table 3 and the equations for the post Quiet Revolution (post-QR) are presented in Tables 4 and 5. The lambda effects, seen in the left column on the above mentioned tables measures the extent to which a given covariate adds to or subtracts from the overall suicide rate (depending on whether the parameter is positive or negative). The right column in these tables gives the multiplicative terms which are the antilogarithms of each lambda, and measure the extent to which a specific covariate multiplies the overall suicide rate net of all the other predictors in the model. The pre-QR equations explain between 81 and 91 percent (females and males respectively) of the variance (R^2) in the probability of suicide among men and women. The post-QR equations without the unemployment effect explain 91 percent of the variance (R^2) in the probability of suicide among men and and 88 percent among women. The post-QR equations without the childlessness effect but which includes the unemployment effect explain 90 percent of the variance in the probability of suicide among men and and 88 percent among women.[11]

In the pre-QR time periods, males and females, aged 15-19 had a reduced risk in deaths due to suicide in comparison to the other age groups. In the post QR time period, females aged 15-19 and 65+ and males aged 25-34 had the lowest risk. Males aged 65+ experienced the greatest risk of suicide in the pre-QR period and males aged 65 and over and 15-19 for the post-QR period. Among females, persons aged 45-54 experienced the greatest risk of suicide for the pre-QR time period whereas the female age group at greatest risk in the post-QR time period was those aged 45-54[12]. From the pre-QR time period to the post-QR time period, males experienced an increase in risk of suicide for the age groups 15-19 and 20-24 and females experienced an increase in risk of suicide for the age groups 15-19, 20-24 and 25-34. This change in age effects is larger at the younger ages.

The influence of "no religion" on suicide, the measure for religious individualism, is as predicted; namely the effect of this variable on suicide was significant only for males in the post-QR time period (P= .000 and .003; Tables 4 & 5, respectively). Thus, a unit increase in 'no religion' leads to a 1.7 percent increase in the average suicide rate of males with the first equation (see Table 4) and to a 1.3 percent increase in the average suicide rate of males with the second equation (see Table 5). The relationship between "no religion" and suicide was positive for all the equations except for females in the pre-QR time period. Support is given to Durkheim's prediction that loss of religious integration increases the risk of suicide but this appears to be applicable only to males.

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[11] The $R^2{}_A$ is a pseudo R^2 measure and is computed as follows: $1-(L^2{}_m/L^2{}_B)$, where $L^2{}_m$ = model Log-Likelihood Chi-Square; $L^2{}_B$ = baseline Log-Likelihood Chi-Square.

[12] Mao, et.al. (1990) report that for the Canadian population, the age group for males that are at highest risk are those aged 15-19 whereas for females, the age group at highest risk is 45-50.

Of the selected variables used to measure domestic integration, (divorce, MFLFP and childlessness), only divorce and childlessness were found to have significant effects on male suicide in the post-QR period. Divorce also has a significant effect on female suicide in the post-QR period which is contrary to the hypothesis. As predicted, childlessness was not significant for females during the pre- or post-QR period nor was it significant for males in the pre-QR period. It was, however, significant for males in the post-QR period indicating that having children is more beneficial in reducing suicide risk for men than for women (P= .000 and P= .302; men and women, respectively). A unit increase in 'childlessness' leads to a .28 percent increase in the average suicide rate of males (see Table 5). This finding is rather interesting since the normative attitude links the importance of having children to women rather than to men. For example, Thorne (1987) concludes from his review of family literature that "in various twists of definition and labelling...women and children have been repeatedly defined in terms of one another" (p.97). Ambert (1990) also argues that "women are often considered to be more marriage and family oriented than men" (p.199).

According to our hypothesis, divorce was not significant for either gender in the pre-QR period but a significant, positive relationship was found between divorce and suicide for both genders in the post-QR period, (P=.002 and .023 for equation 4; P=.000 and .022 for equation 5; males and females, respectively). Thus, a 1% increase in 'divorce' leads to between a .19 to .25 percent increase in the average suicide rate of males and to a .30 percent increase in the average suicide rate for females with the first equation (see Tables 4 and 5). These findings support the prediction that divorce increases the risk of suicide for males but they are contrary to the prediction for females. Durkheim argued that men benefit more from marriage so that when divorce occurs, men no longer have the integration and regulation that marriage had previously provided them. Trovato (1991) obtained similar results when he looked at the relationship between marital status and suicide among those 35 years and older in Canada for the period of 1951-1981. In relation to married people, divorced individuals had a higher propensity for suicide but men experienced a greater acceleration in risk over time than did women (ratio 1981/1951= 1.52 and 0.95; respectively).

Although divorce has a significant effect on both male and female suicide, it should be noted that the impact of divorce has a differential effect by gender (Stack,1990:121). Men suffer more from the loss of social integration whereas women suffer mainly from material loss. Stack (1990) argues that :

> While divorced males and females report relatively high levels of suicidogenic psychological traits such as depression, the causes of such traits are different. For males the affiliative

> losses (integration losses in the Durkheimian vocabulary) account for the depression. For females the economic losses (economic anomie in the Durkheimian usage) account for the depression (p.121) (see also Gerstel, Riessman, and Rosenfild, 1985).

Women have more costs associated with divorce than do men. "Women are more likely to bear total responsibility for the children once the marriage is dissolved. They have less money than men, lower-paying jobs, and fewer alternatives to meet people of the opposite sex" (Baker,1990:199). The divorce literature indicates that divorced women who rely on financial assistance from others and who have children in the home suffer more from high stress levels and are the least likely to cope (Amato and Partridge, 1987; Milardo,1987; and Baker,1990). Stack (1990) states that "divorced women today are worse off financially than divorced women were before the era of no-fault divorce" and suggests that suicide can be referred to as an 'inherently stressful life crisis' (p.121). Arendell (1988) found that "...most divorced mothers enter into divorce with naive assumptions and report that they simply did not anticipate the depression and role conflict they found in their new marital status" (in Stack,1990:126). Arendell (1988) and Weitzman (1985) argue that the relationship between divorce and female suicide can be explained by depression that results from the pressures that many divorced women are faced with. Therefore, if divorce for women leads to stress, economic anomie and a decrease in integration, it is not surprising that divorce also has an effect on female suicide.

As predicted, MFLFP was not significant for either gender in the pre-QR period or for females in the post-QR period. However, contrary to the hypothesis, MFLFP was also not significant for males in the post-QR period (P=.104 and .258, equations 4 & 5, respectively). It is interesting that in the pre-QR time period MFLFP had a positive impact on male and female suicide whereas in the post-QR time period, the impact of MFLFP on suicide was negative for both sexes. This is similar to results found by Wasserman (1991), who found that MFLFP had 'a non-significant but negative' impact on male and female suicide in Ontario. Trovato and Vos (1992) found that for all of Canada, MFLFP had a positive effect on suicide rates during 1971 but had a negative impact on suicide rates by 1981. The authors argue that this reversal in the relationship is consistent with the Status Integration Theory of Gibbs and Martin (1964).

> In 1971 Canadian society had not fully accepted the changing status and expanding roles of women which began to take form in the early to mid sixties. Work for women entailed not only an infrequent status, but also a significant degree of role conflict and role overload; for males, a working wife denoted failure in the traditional role of sole breadwinner. Thus in 1971, suicide correlated positively for both sexes. By 1981, the impact of the Women's movement had spread throughout most of the society. [...] For women, work, motherhood, and the pursuit of a career came to be viewed as being normative. As more married women entered the labor force, households benefitted from the additional income provided by working wives, thus enhancing well-being among family members. The outcome of these developments has resulted in a significant decline in suicide potential in both women and men (p.16).

The effect of economic anomie on suicide, as measured by the unemployment rate, was as predicted. During the pre-QR time period, the relationship between unemployment and suicide was not significant for males or for females. The effect of unemployment on suicide was not significant for females during the post-QR period (P=.367) but it was significant for males (P=.013). Thus, a unit increase in 'unemployment' leads to a .50 percent increase in the average suicide rate of males (see Table 4). These results indicate that economic anomie is a factor in explaining male suicide but not female suicide rates. For women, an occupation is but one of may different forms of integration and so when faced with unemployment, they are offered more protection. However, for most men, their occupation is tied up with their definition of self and so unemployment may have more psychological implications. When explaining why unemployment did not have significant effect on female suicide in Ontario, Wasserman (1991) states that when faced with unemployment, women are 'compensated for by protection within the kinship system' (p.12). In addition, men do not have the support systems to fall back on when facing unemployment as women do. There are no other integrating structures available to men to take the place of a lost occupation. These findings are consistent with those found by Cormier and Klerman (1985) and Wasserman (1991) who also found that unemployment was a significant factor in explaining male suicide in Quebec.

SUMMARY OF RESULTS

	Anticipated Results		Empirical Results	
	Males	**Females**	**Males**	**Females**
PRE-QUIET REVOLUTION PERIOD				
No Religion	N.S.	N.S.	+N.S.	-N.S
Divorce	N.S.	N.S.	+N.S.	-N.S.
MFLFP	N.S.	N.S.	+N.S.	+N.S.
Unemployment	N.S.	N.S.	-N.S.	+N.S.
Childlessness	N.S.	N.S.	+N.S.	+N.S.
POST-QUIET REVOLUTION PERIOD				
No Religion	+SIG.	N.S.	+SIG	+N.S.
Divorce	+SIG.	N.S.	+SIG	+SIG.
MFLFP	+SIG.	N.S.	-N.S.	-N.S.
Unemployment	+SIG.	N.S.	+SIG.	+N.S.
Childlessness	+SIG.	N.S.	+SIG.	-N.S.

N.S. = Not Significant
SIG. = Significant
+ = Positive relationship
- = Negative relationship

CHAPTER 7. CONCLUSIONS AND SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER WORK

A basic definition of sociology is 'the study of society'. However, until recently, sociology has primarily been the study of society through masculine eyes. This has culminated in a distorted perception of reality as it has virtually left out the experiences and ways of knowing of half the human race. Dorothy Smith referred to sociology as patriarchal (1990:4). She argues that "the opening up of women's experience gives sociologists access to social realities previously unavailable, indeed repressed" and suggests that sociologists need to "begin from the site of [women's] experience, with the ways in which [women] actually exist, and explore the world from where [women] are" (1990:pp.12; 200). By incorporating women's experiences in an analysis of the sex differential in suicide rates, a clearer understanding emerges as to why men are more vulnerable to suicide than are women.

The significant variables which increase the risk of male suicide for the post Quiet Revolution period, in order of importance, are divorce, "no religion", unemployment and childlessness whereas only divorce had a significant effect on female suicides. Overall, the results appear to support the general hypothesis developed in this thesis that male suicide rates in Quebec can be explained as a result of 'the Quiet Revolution', which contributed to increased individualism and a decline in certain forms of collectivity, namely domestic and religious collective life.

However, the effect of MFLFP on suicide did not support the hypothesis, as all of the effects were not significant, including the effect of MFLFP on male suicide. What might be occurring is that many controls were implemented in this analysis, something not typically done in other similar macro level studies of suicide and as such, the net effect of MFLFP may not be significant because other measures such as childlessness, divorce and unemployment, included in the equations are more powerful predictors of suicide. On a more substantive note, also to be considered is the fact that the women's movement occured later in Quebec than for most of the other provinces, and because of this, women in Quebec were slower to enter the labour force in large numbers than women from some of the other provinces. In fact, women in Quebec still participate in the work force at lower levels than women in Ontario (Wasserman,1991:15). As indicated earlier, other Canadian studies have shown a significant negative relationship between MFLFP and suicide. Work not only provides married women yet another source of social contacts but it also enables women to experience increased economic independence. Men will partially benefit "from this development [their wives working] because of the net psychic and economic gains associated with female employment" (Trovato and Vos,1991:14). As married female work force participation becomes more the norm in Quebec, it is likely that the negative relationship between MFLFP and suicide will eventually become significant and thus, similar to results obtained at the national level (see Trovato and Vos,1992).

Also contrary to the hypothesis was the significant effect of divorce on female suicide found for the post-Quiet Revolution time period. It was suggested that divorce for women, especially those with dependent children, is a stressful event and that following divorce, they may experience economic anomie and a decrease in integration due to financial pressures, all of which increases their propensity for suicide. Monica Boyd (1988) argues that the "lower labour force participation rates of female single parents, and the lower wages paid to women relative to men are factors accounting for the lower incomes and impoverishment of female lone-parent families" (pp.96-97). The financial situation that many divorced women experience tends to make them dependent on others which increases stress levels and decreases self-esteem. Fortin, Charron and Hotte (1979) compared one-parent households with two-parent households in Montreal and found that women in one-parent households reported more suicide attempts that the women in two-parent households (in M. Eichler, !988:239). Overall, even though the results of divorce for women in the post-Quiet Revolution period did not support the hypothesis, it does help to explain why female suicide has increased since the 1960's.

A re-interpretation of Durkheim's work on gender differences in suicide is only a beginning. A comparative analysis of the other Canadian provinces needs to be done to add support to the findings presented here. Future research should attempt to expand the data set by including more variables. Although the hypothesis presented are clearly stated at the macro level of analysis, certain aspects of them could be specified at the micro level of analysis. For example, marital status and nativity (native born vs. foreign born) would be useful indicators in terms of examining Durkheim's integration model. Both marital status and nativity can be obtained from death certificates. Another suggestion would be to do an analysis of how men and women differ in method of suicide (eg. guns vs. drug overdose) and how this changes over time for the sexes. It would also be interesting to determine whether there is a difference in the suicide rates between single fathers who have custody of there children compared to those single fathers who do not. The results presented here would suggest that single fathers with custody would be more protected from suicide than than single fathers without child custody.

A final suggestion for future research would be to control for the integrating aspects of occupations. In other words, it could be argued that women are primarily in more integrative, collective types of occupations than are men (secretarial pools, teachers, etc.) and as such, they may be more protected from suicide. Conversely, it is argued in the feminist literature that successful women in male dominated occupations often experience isolation and invisibility (McDaniel,1988; Kanter, 1977; Vickers,1982; Hennig,1970; Epstein,1970). For example, McDaniel (1988) argues that women 'who make it in the world of science or academia' are distanced "from both other males, since no matter how fine a male mind she might have, she can never be quite like them, and [...] from other women because in order to maintain a professional identity, she must not be seen to be like them. It is no wonder that women [in male dominated professions] often feel alienated at best or like freaks at worst" (p.9). Thus, women who are employed in more non-integrating types of jobs such as managers, scientists, academia, etc may be less protected from suicide than women who work in more integrative types of occupations.

Durkheim's theory as applied to the Quebec case appears to hold true in regards to explaining variation in male suicide but breaks down to a large extent when explaining the female suicide rate. The theory holds good in that it predicts increased suicide risk associated with female divorce. Beyond this association, none of the Durkheimian linkages were found to be of any importance in explaining female suicide in Quebec. The argument presented here coincides with the conclusion drawn by Kushner (1985): "As long as suicide is seen as a male behavior, researchers will continue to locate its etiology in the 'male sphere...'"(p.551). It is suggested that women's lower propensity for suicide is a result of their multiple integrating roles that differ not only in quantity in comparison to males, but also in quality. Women traditionally have had a rich network of integrating roles and as such, an increase or a decrease in any one form of integration does not appear to effect their overall level of social integration. Men, on the other hand, have fewer integrating roles, and a loss of integration in any one of them can have more detrimental effects for them in terms of increasing their propensity to suicide. This was found to be true with decreasing religiosity, increasing unemployment, divorce and childlessness. The latter was the most remarkable finding in that it links the importance of domestic integration to the well being of males rather than to females, a contradiction to the normative idea that integration with one's children is part of women's natural role.

It is frequently assumed that as egalitarianism becomes more plausible for women, their roles will become more "masculinized" and more competitive, and that their suicide rates will therefore eventually equate those of men. It is the belief of this writer that this is a false assumption. To believe otherwise would be to argue that women have been fighting for equality in order to become like men when in fact women only want the opportunities and choices afforded to men. As Faludi (1991) so aptly put: "Feminism's agenda is basic: It asks that women not be forced to 'choose' between public justice and private happiness. It asks that women be free to define themselves-instead of having their identity defined for them, time and again, by their culture and their men" (p.*xxiii*). To assume that for women to become successful at climbing the 'corporate ladder' they have to become like men is to assume that success is synonymous with masculinization and is somehow biologically fixed. It is entirely plausible that women will continue to become competitive in the public realm without giving up their emphasis on relationships. As indicated earlier, the literature demonstrates that the woman's movements have had either no impact on female suicide rates or has served to reduce their risk. Moreover, as women's numbers continue to increase in the male dominated professions so as to no longer be at the token level, their power to initiate change within these professions will also increase. It is quite likely that rather than being realms of isolation for women, these occupations will become reorganized so that they are more integrating than they are at the present. In this way, women's equal participation within these professions will benefit both themselves and men.

Men have not had to choose between being competitively successful over having meaningful relationships. The division of labour has delegated the instrumental roles to men and the expressive roles to females. Ideally, the expressive and instrumental realms will no longer be defined by sex but rather, become synthesized as one for both men and women. "Men need women as much as women need men. The bonds between the sexes can chafe, and they can be, and have been, used to constrain women. But they also can promote mutually beneficial growth and change" (Faludi, 1991:457). Already, we see that men are taking a more active role in fatherhood even though their contribution to housework is still minimal. This is in no way meant to imply that these changes are to crystallize in the near future as women's battle for equality is by far from over. Many women still face double work loads, the quality and cost of child care facilities still discourages many mothers from entering paid labour, women's earning potential is still less than their male counterparts and employment opportunities for women are still concentrated largely at menial service occupations (see Wilson, 1986; de Koninck,1991). Only when women's and men's domestic contribution and income potential are equal, will normative attitudes about sex appropriate roles be redefined.

The results presented here suggest that the sex differential in Quebec's suicide rates can be explained by different integrating and regulating structures for women and men that result from the normative attitude and not from women's 'natural' differences as originally proposed by Durkheim. Women's psychological well- being has not been threatened by their entrance into the public realm, as some researchers have predicted. Women continue to be at lower risk in terms of suicide compared to men. Furthermore, an increase in individualism and a decline in certain forms of collectivity, brought about by the Quiet Revolution of the early 1960's, appears to have had pathological effects for the psychological well-being of men but not necessarily for women. Thus, individualism for men can be described as an alienating and narcissistic experience whereas for women, individualism has been a liberating experience that appears to have increased their psychological well-being, especially in terms of suicide. It appears unlikely that the male/female suicide rates will ever converge. If female collectivity continues, and if male collectivity continues to deteriorate, it is more than likely that the suicide differential will continue to increase.

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TABLE 1
OVERALL AND AGE-SPECIFIC MEANS AND STANDARD DEVIATIONS OF VARIABLES FOR MALES AND FEMALES; PRE AND POST-QUIET REVOLUTION PERIODS IN QUEBEC

	PRE-QR		POST-QR	
	MEAN	STD DEV	MEAN	STD DEV
FEMALES				
SUICIDE (per 100,000)				
Total	3.45	2.34	6.72	3.74
15-19	0.31	0.28	2.34	1.96
20-24	1.18	1.12	4.75	1.90
25-34	3.44	1.47	7.51	3.26
35-44	3.68	1.04	8.69	3.72
45-54	6.20	1.42	10.34	3.03
55-64	5.49	1.80	8.52	3.42
65+	3.85	1.62	4.86	2.22
NO RELIGION (per 1000)				
Total	2.64	1.21	12.05	8.35
15-19	1.73	0.75	10.95	7.28
20-24	1.96	1.10	18.06	10.59
25-34	2.49	1.24	20.53	10.84
35-44	2.75	1.13	13.41	6.15
45-54	3.05	1.02	9.45	3.79
55-64	3.08	1.39	7.06	1.67
65+	3.40	1.35	4.92	1.27
DIVORCE (per 1000)				
Total	0.52	0.65	15.60	22.45
15-19	0.01	0.01	0.26	0.20
20-24	0.11	0.08	3.25	2.71
25-34	0.56	0.48	19.80	18.07
35-44	0.99	0.94	34.03	35.38
45-54	1.03	0.91	28.97	31.04
55-64	0.64	0.59	17.24	18.11
65+	0.31	0.20	5.65	5.20

	PRE QR		POST QR	
	MEAN	STD DEV	MEAN	STD DEV
MFLFP (per 1000)				
Total	22.12	19.96	172.03	153.89
15-19	2.86	2.04	21.18	12.87
20-24	26.48	19.77	213.73	111.01
25-34	38.24	21.57	296.15	168.92
35-44	36.73	20.36	296.66	167.81
45-54	30.14	18.38	245.81	122.20
55-64	16.46	10.06	118.47	53.87
65+	3.93	1.77	12.23	5.18
UNEMPLOYMENT (per 1000)				
Total	13.27	10.40	42.47	36.28
15-19	23.78	7.74	76.45	35.48
20-24	28.86	9.49	86.49	37.11
25-34	15.09	3.57	48.12	26.37
35-44	9.62	2.87	35.30	22.61
45-54	7.88	2.94	29.34	17.18
55-64	5.85	2.10	18.62	8.63
65+	1.83	0.34	2.93	1.40
CHILDLESSNESS (per 1000 married women)				
Total	98.95	36.14	117.43	64.42
15-19	20.95	4.05	31.18	12.44
20-24	110.82	31.66	228.66	77.75
25-34	122.68	11.79	135.95	31.66
35-44	103.56	17.25	82.68	9.39
45-54	115.55	15.11	97.70	15.00
55-64	114.93	6.68	123.14	12.60
65+	103.16	12.26	122.73	13.21

	PRE QR		POST QR	
	MEAN	STD DEV	MEAN	STD DEV
MALES				
SUICIDE (per 100,000)				
Total	10.09	6.49	22.00	10.02
15-19	1.31	.87	12.86	8.83
20-24	3.15	.59	24.29	15.00
25-34	6.97	2.59	23.24	12.64
35-44	12.95	4.00	23.36	9.83
45-54	14.68	3.04	22.95	6.39
55-64	17.60	3.52	25.83	7.34
65+	13.97	4.08	21.48	6.32
NO RELIGION (per 1000)				
Total	3.34	1.62	18.06	11.61
15-19	1.77	0.81	13.52	9.39
20-24	2.27	1.19	25.69	15.31
25-34	3.13	1.54	29.71	15.42
35-44	3.53	1.09	20.45	9.54
45-54	4.06	1.05	14.90	6.27
55-64	4.54	1.41	12.05	3.37
65+	4.11	2.29	10.10	2.74
DIVORCE (per 1000)				
Total	.53	.43	11.27	16.05
15-19	.00	.00	.20	.19
20-24	.03	.02	1.05	.81
25-34	.36	.13	9.98	8.91
35-44	.73	.25	21.33	21.91
45-54	.99	.32	22.57	24.55
55-64	.90	.32	16.17	17.28
65+	.67	.26	7.61	7.51

	PRE QR		POST QR	
	MEAN	STD DEV	MEAN	STD DEV
UNEMPLOYMENT (per 1000)				
Total	64.80	28.48	65.38	37.93
15-19	48.95	23.48	84.63	31.51
20-24	91.02	37.89	128.62	20.66
25-34	74.89	31.81	75.35	19.07
35-44	67.76	22.59	55.46	14.23
45-54	62.12	22.55	49.18	14.23
55-64	71.09	16.40	52.49	10.63
65+	37.76	13.10	11.92	8.44

TABLE 2. ZERO-ORDER CORRELATIONS BETWEEN PREDICTOR VARIABLES AND SUICIDE FOR FEMALES AND MALES IN PRE- AND POST-QUIET REVOLUTION PERIODS, QUEBEC.

	PRE-QUIET REVOLUTION:1931-1956.	
	Male Suicide Rates	Female Suicide Rates
Suicide	1.0000	1.0000
Time	0.4081*	0.4727*
Age	0.1803*	-0.0879***
Norelig	0.5544*	0.3816*
Divorce	0.6339*	0.6387*
MFLF	0.5728*	0.6373*
Unemp	-0.1394*	0.0594 (NS)
Childlessness	0.2836*	0.0795 (NS)
	POST-QUIET REVOLUTION: 1961-1986	
Suicide	1.0000	1.0000
Time	0.7540*	0.6292*
Age	-0.2197*	0.0074 (NS)
Norelig	0.7892*	0.5240*
Divorce	0.5105*	0.7472*
MFLFP	0.8583*	0.8195*
Unemp	0.3420*	0.2238*
Childlessness	0.3190*	-0.0037 (NS)

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* P≤ .01

** P≤ .05

*** P ≤.10

(NS) not significant

Table 3
Log Rate Regression Analysis of Male and Female Suicide Risk Quebec, Pre-Quiet Revolution:1931-1956[1]

	MALES			FEMALES		
Effect	λ	Z	e^{λ}	λ	Z	e^{λ}
Intercept[2]	-9.49302	--[4]	0.000075	-11.46619	--[4]	0.000012
Age						
15-19	-0.6814	-1.12	0.5059	-2.2825	-1.64	0.1020
20-24	-0.5254	-1.59	0.5913	-1.3897	-1.88	0.2492
25-34	-0.1773	-0.97	0.8375	0.0427	0.12	1.0436
35-44	0.2297	1.21	1.2582	0.3681	0.87	1.4450
45-54	0.1580	0.51	1.1712	1.1061	2.07	3.0225
55-64	0.4937	2.09	1.6384	1.0952	2.43	2.9898
65+ (R)[3]	0.5027	--[4]	1.6532	1.0601	--[4]	2.8867
Year						
1931	0.4677	1.67	1.5963	-0.4419	-0.75	0.6428
1936	0.2370	1.02	1.2674	-0.0520	0.09	0.9493
1941	0.1575	0.84	1.1706	-0.0054	-0.01	0.9946
1946	-0.1453	-1.31	0.8648	-0.0224	-0.17	0.9778
1951	-0.3178	-2.09	0.7277	0.1378	0.52	1.1477
1956 (R)[3]	-0.3991	--[4]	0.6709	0.3839	--[4]	1.4680
Norelig	0.0816	0.73	1.0850	-0.2363	-0.46	0.7895
Divorce	0.6273	1.20	1.8725	-0.1313	-0.31	0.8770
MFLFP	0.0087	1.32	1.0087	0.0113	0.89	1.0114
UNEMPL	-0.0031	-0.66	0.9969	0.0218	0.46	1.0220
0-Child	0.0065	1.45	1.0065	0.0011	0.11	1.0011
L^2_m	26.99			24.52		
d.f[5]	25			25		
L^2_B	316.85			126.49		
d.f.	41			41		
R^2_A[6]	0.91			0.81		

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[1] Z values below 1.96 are considered statistically insignificant.

[2] The intercept parameter reflects the risk for persons aged 65+ in 1956 (the reference age and year group), given their parameter values and corresponding means for their predictor variables

[3] (R) = Reference category

[4] -- = Z test not computed.

[5] d.f. = degrees of freedom.

[6] $R^2_A = 1-(L^2_m/L^2_B)$, where L^2_m = the model log-likelihood Chi-square, and L^2_B = the baseline log-likelihood Chi-square (intercept only).

Table 4
Log Rate Regression Analysis of Main Effects (Without Childlessness Effect) of Male and Female Suicide Risk in Quebec, Post-Quiet Revolution:1961-1986[1]

	MALES			FEMALES		
Effects	λ	Z	e^{λ}	λ	Z	e^{λ}
Intercept[2]	-8.61731	--[4]	0.000181	-9.52350	--[4]	0.000073
Age						
15-19	-0.01315	-0.05	0.98694	-0.16513	-0.31	0.84778
20-24	-0.02907	-0.15	0.97135	-0.15535	-0.63	0.85612
25-34	-0.24753	-2.89	0.78073	0.12265	-0.63	1.13049
35-44	-0.08091	-0.73	0.92228	0.05509	0.25	1.05664
45-54	-0.02384	-0.22	0.97644	0.29570	1.50	1.34407
55-64	0.12094	1.19	1.12856	0.18197	0.99	1.19958
65+ (R)[3]	0.27356	--[4]	1.31464	-0.33493	--[4]	0.71539
Year						
1961	-0.18439	-1.32	0.83161	-0.03659	-0.15	0.96407
1966	0.07089	0.56	1.07346	0.14240	0.60	1.15304
1971	-0.03056	-0.64	0.96990	0.08587	0.97	1.08966
1976	0.01810	0.23	1.01826	-0.08154	-0.64	0.92170
1981	0.20357	2.32	1.22577	0.05588	0.32	1.05747
1986 (R)[3]	-0.07761	--[4]	0.92533	-0.16602	--[4]	0.84703
NOREL	0.01698	3.87	1.01713	0.01720	1.29	1.01735
(In)DIV	0.18928	2.86	1.20838	0.29695	1.99	1.34575
MFLFP	-0.00052	-1.26	0.99948	-0.00081	-0.88	0.99919
UNEMPL.	0.00497	2.23	1.00498	0.00157	0.34	1.00157
L^2_m	64.58			34.86		
d.f.[5]	26			26		
L^2_B	638.69			281.90		
d.f.	41			41		
R^2_A[6]	0.90			0.88		

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[1] Z values below 1.96 are considered statistically insignificant.

[2] The intercept parameter reflects the risk for persons aged 65+ in 1956 (the reference age and year group), given their parameter values and corresponding means for their predictor variables

[3] (R) = Reference category

[4] -- = Z test not computed.

[5] d.f. = degrees of freedom.

[6] $R^2_A = 1-(L^2_m/L^2_B)$, where L^2_m = the model log-likelihood Chi-square, and L^2_B = the baseline log-likelihood Chi-square (intercept only).

Table 5

Log Rate Regression Analysis of Main Effects (Without Unemployment Effect) of Male and Female Suicide Risk in Quebec, Post-Quiet Revolution:1961-1986[1]

	MALES			FEMALES		
Effects	λ	Z	e^{λ}	λ	Z	e^{λ}
Intercept[2]	-8.25719	--[4]	0.000259	-9.53474	--[4]	0.000072
Age						
15-19	0.60323	2.43	1.82801	-0.17238	-0.34	0.84166
20-24	0.03131	0.21	1.03181	0.00353	0.01	1.00354
25-34	-0.28029	-3.25	0.75556	-0.14792	-0.85	0.86250
35-44	-0.13698	-1.34	0.87199	0.00088	0.00	1.00088
45-54	-0.14226	-1.43	0.86740	0.26362	1.45	1.30163
55-64	-0.02909	-0.30	0.97133	0.16813	1.01	1.18309
65+ (R)[3]	-0.04592	--[4]	0.95512	-0.11586	--[4]	0.89060
Year						
1961	-0.06188	-0.45	0.94000	-0.03903	-0.16	0.96172
1966	0.19917	1.54	1.22039	0.13286	0.56	1.14209
1971	-0.03365	-0.70	0.96691	0.08147	0.96	1.08488
1976	-0.11323	-1.93	0.89295	-0.09819	-0.86	0.90648
1981	0.09593	1.06	1.10068	0.07241	0.41	1.07510
1986 (R)[3]	-0.08634	--[4]	0.91728	-0.14952	--[4]	0.86112
NOREL	0.01290	2.73	1.01298	0.02261	1.73	1.02287
(ln)DIV	0.24775	3.78	1.28114	0.29792	2.01	1.34705
MFLFP	-0.00026	-0.65	0.99974	-0.00082	-0.90	0.99918
0-CHILD	0.00277	3.16	1.00277	-0.00089	-0.52	0.99911
L^2_m	59.58			34.70		
d.f.[5]	26			26		
L^2_B	638.69			281.90		
d.f.	41			41		
R^2_A[6]	0.91			0.88		

---

[1] Z values below 1.96 are considered statistically insignificant.

[2] The intercept parameter reflects the risk for persons aged 65+ in 1956 (the reference age and year group), given their parameter values and corresponding means for their predictor variables

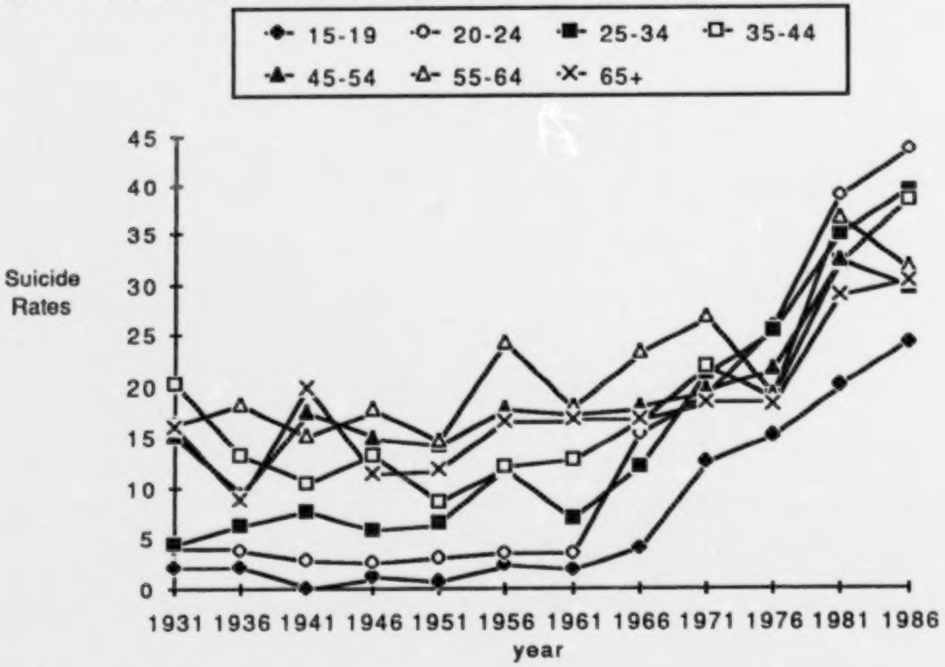
[3] (R) = Reference category

[4] -- = Z test not computed.

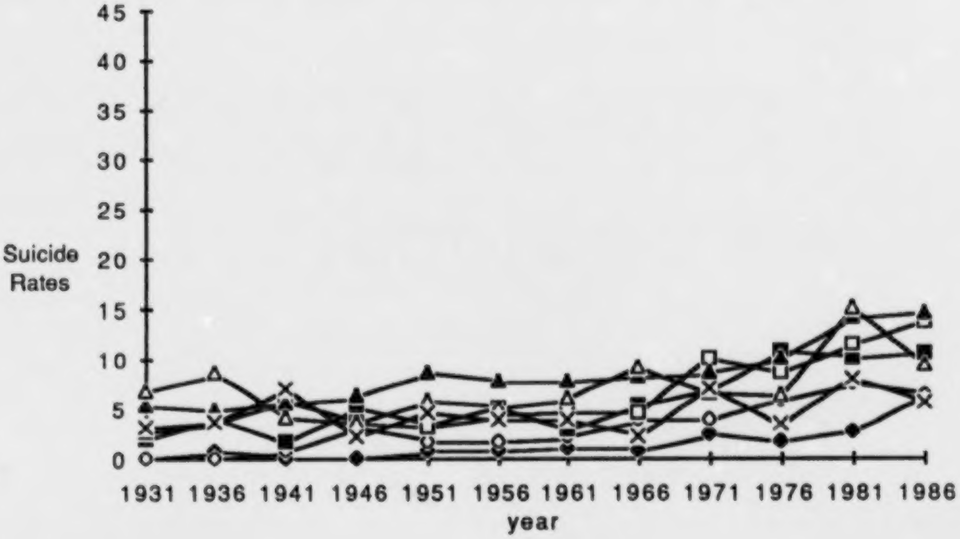
[5] d.f. = degrees of freedom.

[6] $R^2_A = 1-(L^2_m/L^2_B)$, where L^2_m = the model log-likelihood Chi-square, and L^2_B = the baseline log-likelihood Chi-square (intercept only).

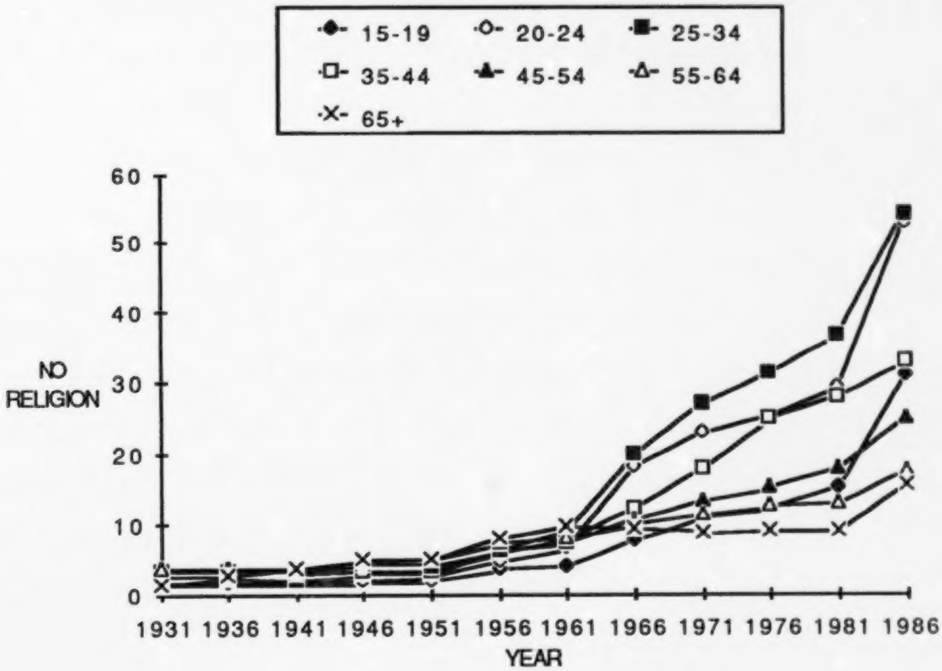
GRAPH 1: MALE SUICIDE RATES, QUEBEC: 1931-1986



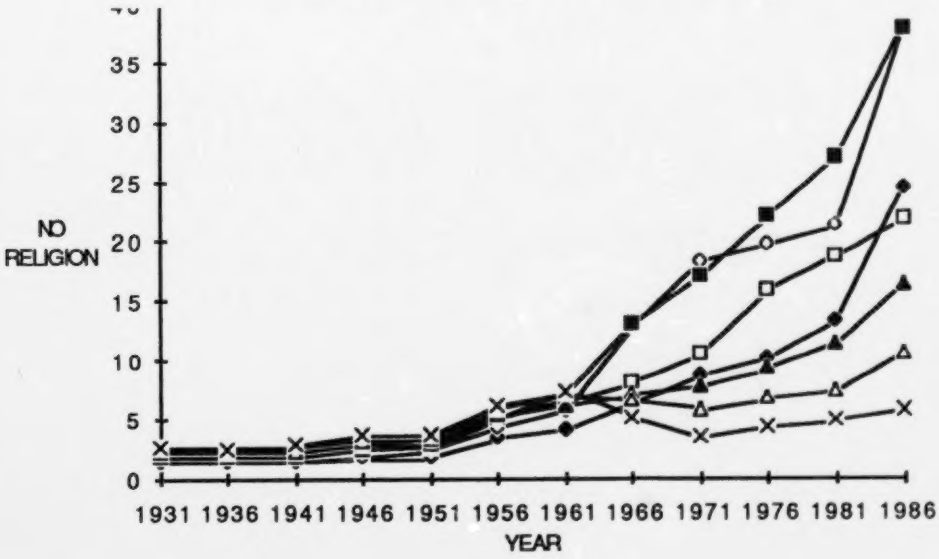
GRAPH 2: FEMALE SUICIDE RATES, QUEBEC: 1931-1986



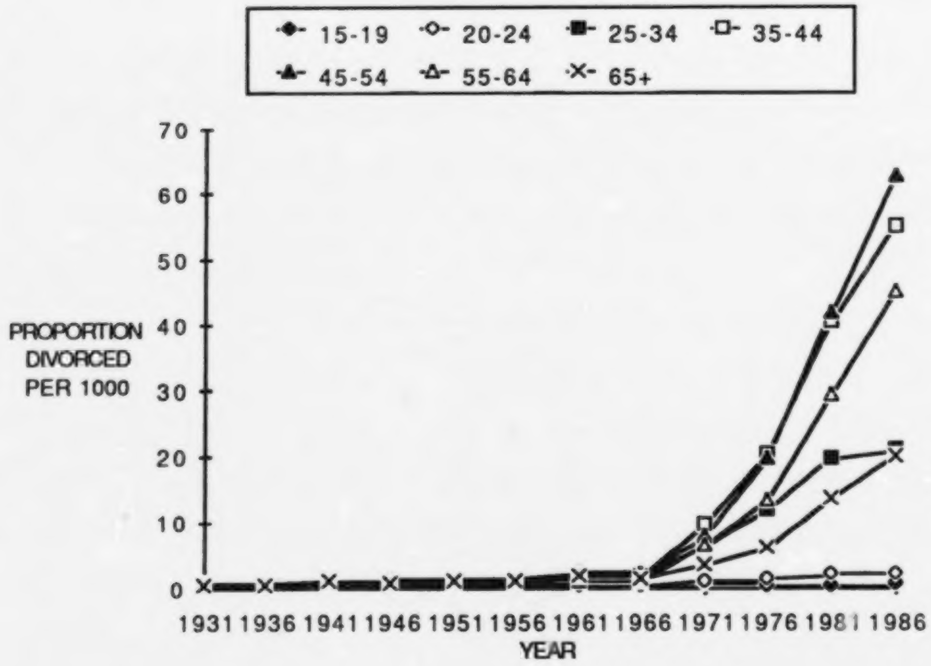
GRAPH 3: PROPORTION OF MALES WHO REPORTED NO RELIGIOUS AFFILIATION



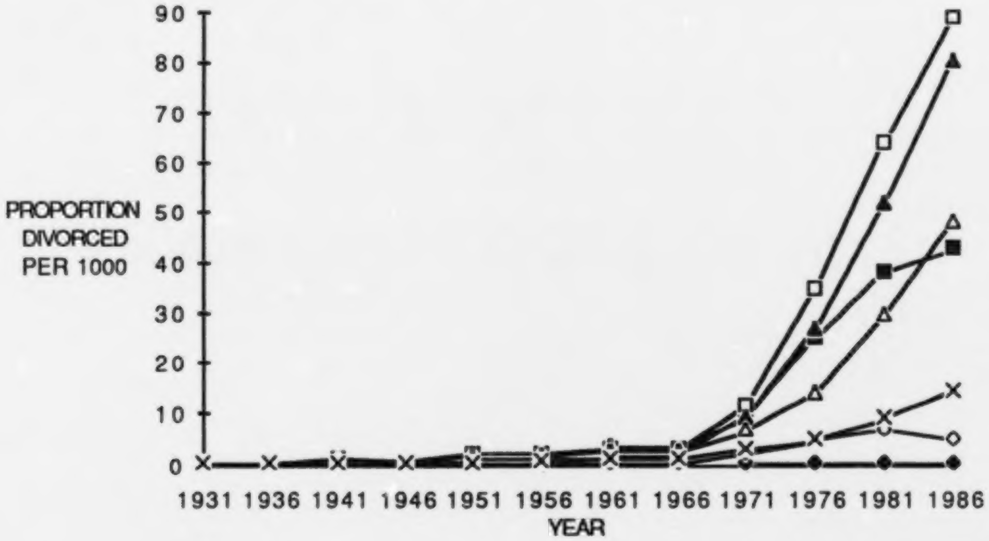
GRAPH 4:PROPORTION OF FEMALES WHO REPORTED NO RELIGIOUS AFFILIATION



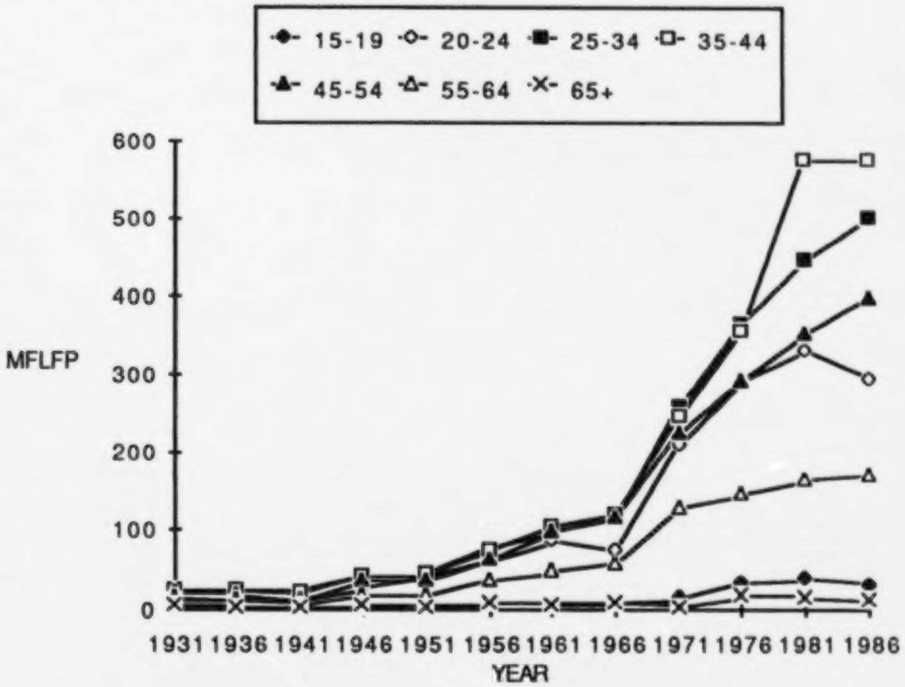
GRAPH 5: PROPORTION MALES DIVORCED: QUEBEC, 1931-1986



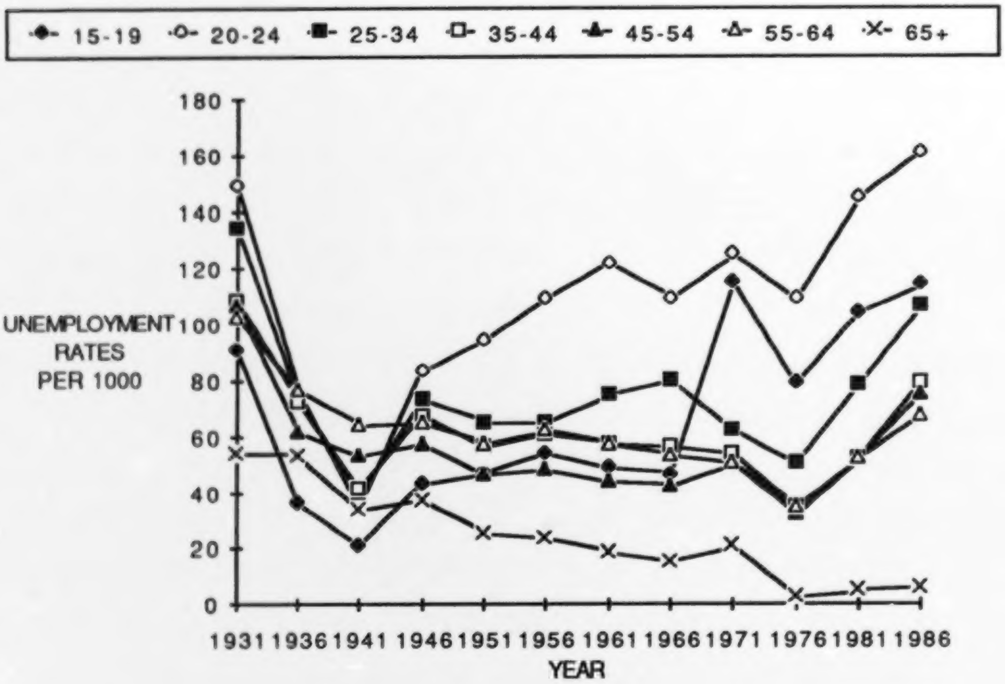
GRAPH 6: PROPORTION FEMALES DIVORCED: QUEBEC, 1931-1986



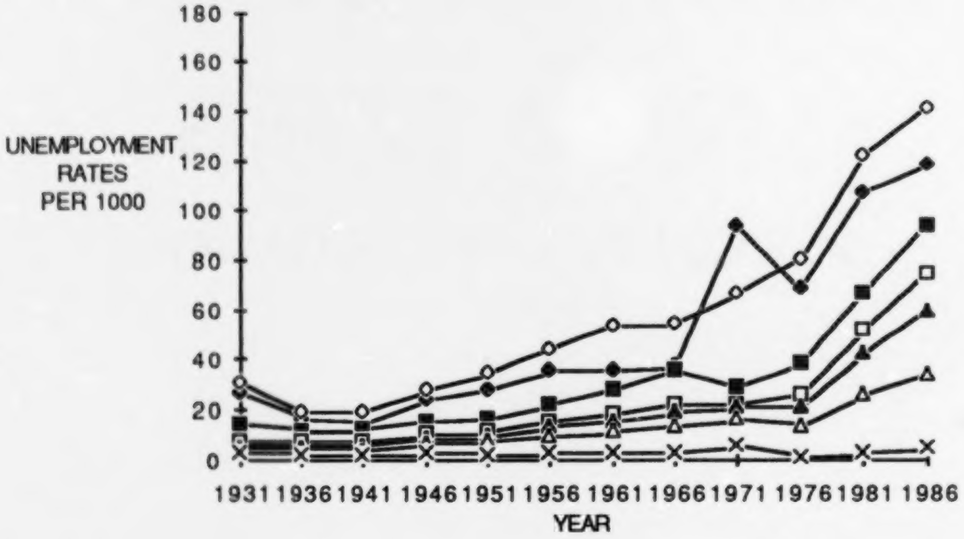
GRAPH 7: MARRIED FEMALE LABOUR FORCE PARTICIPATION: QUEBEC, 1931-1986



GRAPH 8:UNEMPLOYMENT RATES PER 1000 MALES:QUEBEC 1931-1986



GRAPH 9: UNEMPLOYMENT RATES PER 1000 FEMALES: QUEBEC,1931-1986.



GRAPH 10: CHILDLESSNESS PER 1000 MARRIED WOMEN: QUEBEC, 1931-1986